



December 1933

The Fallacies of the N. R. A. See page 415

The Mystery of Retail Price. See page 388

# *The American* **Mercury**

*Edited by*

**H. L. MENCKEN**

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Musical Slaughter-House

Them Asses

Marching into the Morning

Atheism Succumbs to Doubt

Refuge

Sunday

The Law of the Chase

Siege of Love

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The Special Day

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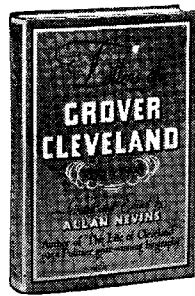
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## The AMERICAN MERCURY

VOLUME XXX

December 1933

NUMBER 120

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### THE THEATRE

THE TEN BEST PLAYS OF 1909-1919.

*Edited by Burns Mantle & Garrison P. Sherwood.*

*Dodd, Mead & Company*

\$3.75

5 1/2 x 8 1/4; 702 pp.

*New York*

Mr. Mantle says that there is no satisfactory record of the New York theatre in the years 1909-1919, and in the present book he and his collaborator try to fill the gap. First, they reproduce ten plays, which, in their opinion, offer "an interesting cross-section of the drama representing the decade." The plays are: "The Easiest Way," by Eugene Walter; "Mrs. Bumpstead-Leigh," by Harry James Smith; "Disraeli," by Louis Napoleon Parker; "Romance," by Edward Sheldon; "Seven Keys to Baldpate," by George M. Cohan; "On Trial," by Elmer Rice; "The Unchastened Woman," by Louis Kaufman Anspacher; "Good Gracious Annabelle," by Clare Kummer; "Why Marry?," by Jesse Lynch Williams; and "John Ferguson," by St. John Ervine. There are some biographical notes about the authors, followed by "Mr. Sherwood's most painstaking collected facts covering the production and casting of all the plays produced during the years covered by the book." There is an index of authors, and one of plays and casts.

#### ELIZABETHAN PLAYS.

*Edited by Hazelton Spencer.*

*Little, Brown & Company*

\$4

6 x 9 1/4; 1173 pp.

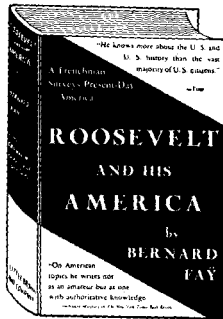
*Boston*

There are twenty-eight plays in this collection, which begins with the first part of Marlowe's "Tamburlaine the Great" (1587-8) and ends with James Shirley's "The Lady of Pleasure" (1635). It would be hard to quarrel with Dr. Spencer's selections, which are both representative and intrinsically interesting, and it would be impossible to quarrel with his introductions and notes, which are models of sound information and succinct presentation. The plays are printed in clear type in double columns. In every case the basic text comes from the earliest known edition, but the spelling has been modernized, and the additions, emendations and conjectures of later editors are always noted. Dr. Spencer is not afraid to be liberal with his notes, and in consequence his edition will be of special value to the general

*Continued on page vi*



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### Check List of NEW BOOKS

*Continued from page iv*

reader, whose acquaintance with the Elizabethan vocabulary is likely to be small. The editor is associate professor of English at the Johns Hopkins.

### MEDICINE

#### THE HISTORY & EPIDEMIOLOGY OF SYPHILIS.

By William Allen Pusey. *Charles C. Thomas*  
\$2 5 7/8 x 8 3/4; 113 pp. *Springfield, Ill.*

Dr. Pusey is a strong partisan of the theory that syphilis was unknown in Europe until after Columbus's first voyage. The first great outbreak followed the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII of France, in 1494; since 1505 or thereabout the disease has been endemic in every region touched by civilization. Dr. Pusey sets forth in some detail the long history of the efforts made to combat it. Its highly infectious nature, of course, was quickly realized, and almost as quickly mercury began to be used in treating it. But there was a recurring tendency to confuse syphilis and gonorrhea, and this confusion got such powerful support from the great John Hunter that it survived until 1837. Since 1905, when Schaudinn and Hoffmann discovered the *spirochaeta pallida*, there has been rapid progress. In 1906-7 Wassermann, Neisser and Bruck developed the Wassermann reaction, in 1906 Metchnikoff and Roux perfected the now familiar mercurial preventive, and in 1909 Ehrlich introduced salvarsan. Dr. Pusey is professor emeritus of dermatology at the College of Medicine, University of Illinois, and a former president of the American Medical Association.

#### THE NEW DENTISTRY.

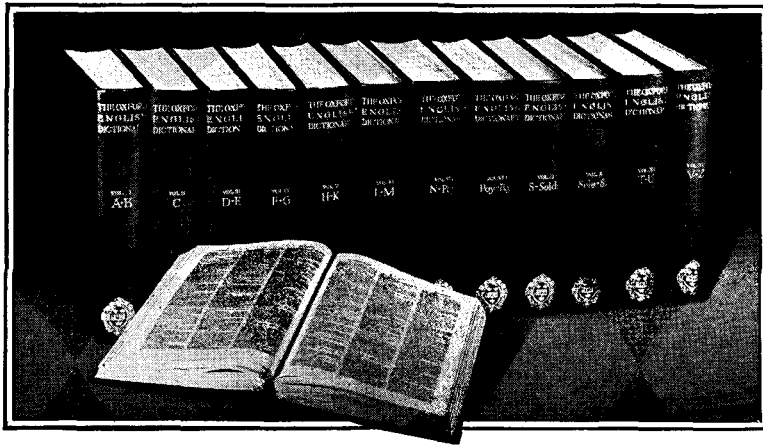
By Leroy Matthew Simpson Miner.  
*The Harvard University Press*  
\$2 4 7/8 x 7 1/2; 219 pp. *Cambridge, Mass.*

Dr. Miner is dean of the Dental School at Harvard, and his book is a reprint of six lectures delivered at the Lowell Institute. He begins with a brief historical survey. The earliest men whose bones have been unearthed had bad teeth, and there is even some evidence of caries in the primitive apes. False teeth were common among the Romans, and the Incans of South America sported gold fillings. But it was not until 1840 that the world's first dental college was founded—the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, still surviving as a school of the University of Maryland. Dr. Miner describes the genesis of some of the commoner dental diseases, and shows what is being done to combat them. The chief business of the dentist hereafter, he believes, will be prevention. There is an index.

*Continued on page viii*

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NEW HAVEN

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viii



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Continued from page vi

### HISTORY

GREAT MEN OF SCIENCE. *A History of Scientific Progress.*

By Philipp Lenard. The Macmillan Company  
\$3 6 x 8 3/4; 389 pp. New York

Dr. Lenard, a Nobel Prize winner in physics, was formerly professor of physics and director of the Radiological Institute of the University of Heidelberg. He is also a Rumford medallist of the Royal Society of London. He has distinguished himself for his researches into phosphorescence, the cathode rays, and the ionization potential. In the present book he deals briefly and in chronological order with the contributions of the truly great scientists, in all fields, in the last 2,000 years. He stops roughly with the World War. The volume should be of interest to the general reader. It is very well written, and with a fine warmth. There are many excellent illustrations, and at the end are two indices, one of names and the other of subjects. The translation is by H. Stafford Hatfield. Dr. E. N. da C. Andrade, Quain professor of physics in the University of London, contributes a preface.

### LOWERED BOATS.

By Foster Rhea Dulles. Harcourt, Brace & Company  
\$2.50 8 x 5 1/4; 292 pp. New York

This is a chronicle of American whaling from the first offshore attempts at Sag Harbor and East Hampton to the disaster in the Arctic which cost the industry all of a million dollars, and practically ruined it,—thirty-three ships had to be abandoned because of the weather. Thus, writes Mr. Dulles, "in 1872 the American whaling fleet totaled only 220 vessels, less than a third the number sailing from American ports some thirty years earlier." With the decline of the market for whalebone in the Twentieth Century, American whaling was finally doomed. Although it is still profitably pursued from Norway, the *Charles W. Morgan*, now berthed on the beach near New Bedford, is the only survivor of the American fleet. The book is full of informative detail; it took some digging on Mr. Dulles's part to collect it. There are nine illustrations, a bibliography and an index.

### THE WHITE ARMIES OF RUSSIA.

By George Stewart. The Macmillan Company  
\$4 6 x 8 3/4; 469 pp. New York

When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in the Fall of 1917, the Allied Powers became alarmed,

Continued on page x

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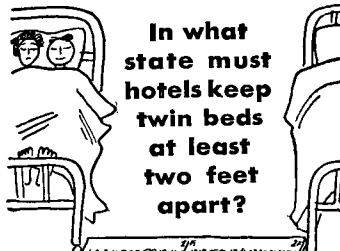
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The J. B. Lippincott Company  
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By A. E. Housman. The Macmillan Company  
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page xviii

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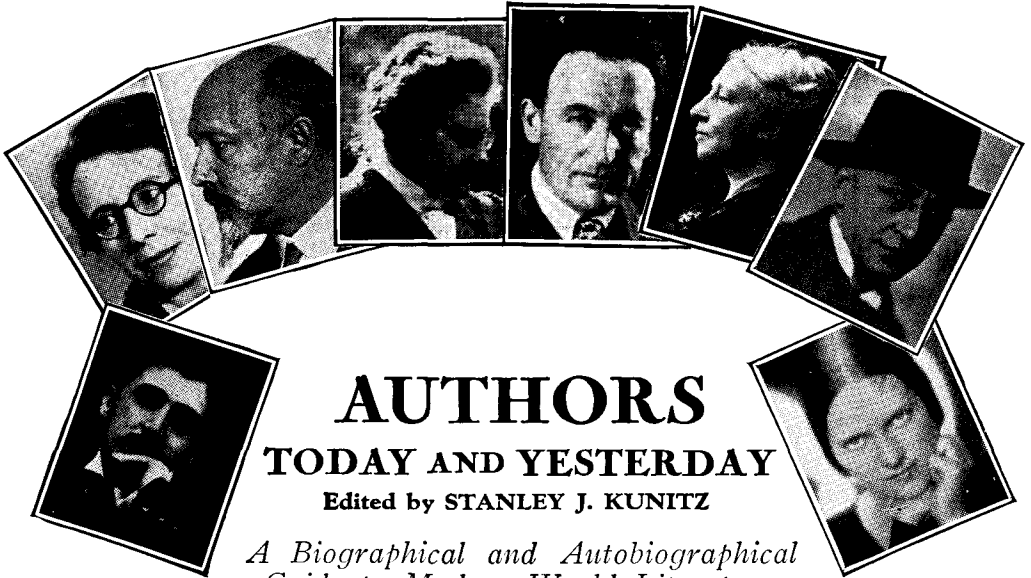
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# *The American* MERCURY

VOLUME XXX



NUMBER 120

DECEMBER

1933

## TEN YEARS

**M**Y RETIREMENT from the editorship of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, to take effect at the end of the present year, was announced on October 6, and is thus stale news to the readers of these pages. A good many of them, in fact, have long since sent me pleasant words of farewell, and from several I have received more material certificates of goodwill, including two cases of beer. My thankfulness to all of them needs no saying, nor my natural regret on severing so charming and stimulating a relationship. But I am firmly convinced that magazines, like governments, are benefited by rotation in office, and I am carrying out that principle by yielding to Mr. Henry Hazlitt.

Of his qualifications for the post there will be plenty of evidence immediately. He is fourteen years younger than I am, but he has behind him a varied and rich experience in the editorial chair, and that

experience fits him peculiarly for the work ahead of him. He is the only competent critic of the arts that I have ever heard of who was at the same time a competent economist, of practical as well as theoretical training, and he is one of the few economists in human history who could really write. Thus he is extraordinarily well equipped for the business which faces him, for the big show in America, during the next few years, will be carried on mainly in the economic ring, and if it is to be dealt with according to the taste of the readers of THE AMERICAN MERCURY it must be dealt with boldly, gracefully and with not too much solemnity.

In case there be any among those readers who fear that the change of editorial administration will convert the magazine into something that it is not they may put their minds at ease. In its basic aims and principles there will be little change. Hereafter, as in the past, it will try to play

a bright light over the national scene, revealing whatever is amusing and instructive, but avoiding mere moral indignation as much as possible. There are reasons for believing that the United States, as it stands, might be improved, but there is certainly no reason for complaining of it as a spectacle. That spectacle fascinates Mr. Hazlitt as it has always fascinated me. He will try to discern and set forth its changing phases as I have done. The only difference will be that he will bring a fresher eye to the enterprise, and kinds of discernment that lie outside my equipment. He was my first and only choice for the post he takes, and I am completely convinced that he will make a first-rate magazine.



My reasons for clearing out are not, of course, purely theoretical—that is, they are not based wholly upon the doctrine that ten years is long enough for one editor to serve. I believe in that doctrine thoroughly, and have put it into practice twice, once in the case of the *Smart Set* and now with THE AMERICAN MERCURY; but I am also moved by an eager desire to devote more of my time to other undertakings, some of which have been luring me for a long while, often to my acute impatience and discomfort.

The main one is the writing of some books. There was a time when all of my books were simply reworkings of magazine and newspaper articles, and putting them together was thus a relatively easy matter. But with my “Treatise on the Gods”, begun in 1927, I ventured into fields outside the periodical range, and it soon became apparent that the hard study and continuous application that such work demanded were hardly compatible with the daily duties of a magazine editor. It

took me three years to write “Treatise on the Gods”, for the only time I had to give it was an occasional evening, and books of its kind cannot be written comfortably on occasional evenings. Its successor, “Treatise on Right and Wrong”, has been under way since 1930, and should have been finished long ago. Now I’ll be free to push it to quick completion, for despite my difficulties three-fifths of it is done, and the rest is blocked out.

I go into these details because many readers of THE AMERICAN MERCURY have been polite enough to show some interest in my plans for the future, and my gratitude to them for their ten years of un-failing support induces me to think of them as friends. I have a schedule of writing that will keep me busy for at least five years to come, and at fifty-three it is perhaps imprudent for any man to look further ahead. The books, I hope, will roll out without any more delay, some of them new ones, long planned, and the rest extensive revisions and amplifications of old ones—for example, “The American Language”, which promises to run to two volumes in its next incarnation. For recreation in the intervals of labor I propose to travel, for the world grows more interesting to me every day, and though I have seen rather more of it than most I am still eager to see and savor what is left.



My obligations are many—to the capable and diligent staff of the magazine, to its large corps of contributors (more than 600 in all), to the advertisers who have sustained it in fair weather and foul, and above all, to its body of faithful readers, many of whom have been on its books since the first issue in January, 1924. I have had the pleasure of meeting some of these readers, and have been in correspon-

dence with many more. I have marvelled at times at their patience with my aberrations, and can only offer them my thanks for keeping the magazine going, and for giving me, these ten years, the fun of editing it.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY started out as something considerably more modest than what it has become. When Mr. Knopf and I made our first plans for it we had in mind a magazine of about 20,000 circulation, appealing to a relatively small class of readers, and devoting its attention mainly to the arts. But after the first issue it was plain that many more people were interested in it than we had counted on, and since then it has made a secure place for itself in what may be called the upper bracket of American magazines, and as its scope has widened it has increased in circulation. Not many of its contemporaries have been quoted so often in the newspapers,

and none other has got so much attention in foreign countries.

I am naturally glad that I can leave it in such good hands. It may be that, from time to time, Mr. Hazlitt will be hospitable and enlightened enough to print me, but that is a matter for the future to determine. He is to be editor in fact as well as in name, and my position will be precisely that of any other contributor. My conduct of *The Library* ceases with this issue, and I won't pretend to be sorry, for it began in the *Smart Set* in 1908, and has thus been running twenty-five years. How many books I have reviewed in that time, God alone knows—probably at least four thousand, for I used to plow through whole shelves of them in an issue. My belief is that I have endured enough for the swell letters of my native land. It is now time for other, and perhaps even worse critics to take over the job.

H. L. MENCKEN



# THE MYSTERY OF RETAIL PRICE

BY DANE YORKE

**D**URING one of the recurrent protests of American industry against the competition of foreign-made goods it was the high privilege of the Hon. Andrew W. Mellon to transmit to the Senate Finance Committee a report embodying a large mass of data upon that great evil. As may be remembered, Mr. Mellon was then "the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton," and the report was in his best manner. It was comfortingly detailed, it was marvellously precise; it was also quite vague upon most really important points. But it proved what American industry wished to be proved: *i.e.*, the damnable nature of the foreign selling going on in the American retail markets.

That report was compiled in 1922 as an aftermath of the business collapse of 1921. Its actual leg-work was done by zealous New York consumers (at the instigation of representatives of the Senate Finance Committee), and it thus anticipated by eleven years the work of the present NRA consumer boards. A happy Spring shopping trip through the great Manhattan stores resulted in the purchase of 122 different articles of foreign merchandise, which were then turned over to the appraiser's office of the Port of New York. From the customs records the appraiser determined the cost (in American currency) of each article in the country of its origin, the cost of bringing it to this country, and the duty paid under the

American tariff—all of which, added together, gave the total "landed cost." This figure was then subtracted from the retail price paid by the shoppers and the result set down, in percentage, as the profit-spread. The highest figure shown was 2588% on a card of twelve little buttons whose full landed cost was less than a penny, but which sold in New York for twenty-five cents. But a humble bottle of cod-liver oil from Norway, bought in a store for \$1.25, was found to show an advance of 1774% on its landed cost of about 7 cents.

The report noted the store of purchase for each article, and the emporium of R. H. Macy & Company was honored by being the most frequently mentioned. Twelve different articles came from Macy's, and their spread between landed cost and Macy price ran from 160% to 1012%, with an average of about 325%. Nor was everything that was bought small stuff. One shopper bought from Macy's a china dinner set of 100 pieces whose complete landed cost (including duty at the rate of 55%, or \$11.80) was found to be only \$35.30—but which Macy's had sold for the round sum of \$134.

There were other big fish caught in the same net. The great Fifth Avenue store of Altman's, built from a pedlar's pack, was found to be selling for \$150 a pearl necklace whose total landed cost (including the duty of \$4.28) was only \$18.26. And the high-toned mart of John Wana-

maker, over which the magnificent Grover Whalen presides so proudly in his less public moments, was set down as selling at \$7 a straw hat of English origin whose full landed cost (including a 40% duty, or 70 cents) was only \$2.58½.

Such figures would set any consumer board to yelling to high Heaven; today they might even lead to a demand for the revival, under the Blue Eagle, of the old English punishment of boiling in oil. Yet the sad truth is that such figures mean almost exactly nothing. For the question of price is not as simple as it seems; it cannot be solved by any easy equation between cost and profit on a single sale. There are others factors involved—and among them is the attitude of the buyer.

## II

As an example, the Mellon report noted a certain cuckoo-clock whose value in Germany (by reason of the then great depreciation of the mark) was only 94 cents, and whose total landed cost was \$1.26, but whose retail price in New York was \$22, a spread of 1636%. Now, it so happens that I own one of those clocks; for a dozen years it has kept good time and without costing me a cent in upkeep. When I bought it I wanted a good one, and I knew (or thought I knew) that a price around \$20 (this was pre-1929, remember) would get it. At \$5, at \$10, I would not have bought; at \$15 I would have hesitated; but at \$22 I bought readily. By consumer board standards I may be cuckoo myself, but I still think I got my money's worth. Nor do I hold a grudge over the merchant's big profit. He merely, and cleverly, met my price expectations.

Again, there was featured in that same report a hair-clipper whose landed cost was less than 18 cents, but which was

advertised and sold by Bloomingdale Brothers for 85 cents, a profit-spread of 383%. I own one of those clippers, too, and bought it from Bloomingdale's at the time, and I still recall how I hesitated over the purchase in fear that the price might indicate an inferior article. It proved to be not inferior at all, but a sturdy, well-built, dependable instrument that gave me long service. At 39 cents, at 59 cents, I would not have bought it; at 85 cents I did. The department head at Bloomingdale's who set the price on that clipper just grazed the wavy line of public acceptance. A few cents lower and it would not have sold as well as it did: it would have seemed too cheap.

These, of course, are individual instances. But that they illustrate a general trend is indicated by a story that is classic in department-store circles. The head of a ribbon department found a manufacturer pressed for cash and bought many thousand yards at a price of about 9 cents a yard. It was a ribbon that had sold regularly for 39 cents, and it had that quality. The department head first featured it at 29 cents, with very disappointing sales. Puzzled, he then prepared an advertisement offering it at 19 cents, but by a curious chain of mishaps this advertisement appeared with the price at 59 cents; even the counter cards were so marked. Discovery of the error came about an hour after the ribbon had gone on sale; in desperation the department head rushed to see what might be done to correct it. But when he reached the ribbon counter he found it literally buried under a mob of struggling women, all eager to take advantage of such a bargain. And at 59 cents there melted away in a few hours the entire batch of ribbon that could not be sold at 29. Profiteering—most certainly. But was the store to blame?

This ribbon story directs attention to another factor in price-making: one much overlooked by theorizing professors and amateur critics of business. It is the compulsion the merchant is under of selling, not one or two of an article but a quantity, before his profit even begins. Suppose the department head had bought 3000 yards of ribbon from the distressed manufacturer; at 9 cents a yard it would have cost him \$270. His first effort, at 29 cents, sold perhaps 300 yards, which meant a return of \$87, and a theoretical profit (at 20 cents a yard) of \$60. But that is just where theory and practice go apart; there is a vast difference between apparent profit and real profit. For after selling his 300 yards for \$87 that department head had not made a nickel; he still had to sell \$183 more of the ribbon before he cleared his merchandise cost. Had his original plans gone through he would have had to sell 1000 yards at 19 cents before the merchandise cost was finally cleared. And then he would have had to move 700 more yards at the same price before covering the cost of his advertising, clerk hire, space rent, spoilage, and other items of store operation. Thus, 2000 yards would have been consumed in simply meeting costs, leaving still 1000 yards that the public must be tickled into buying—for the realization of real profit. Nor could the figures on any single yard's sale reveal, or even approximately foretell, what that final real profit might be.

That is the meaning of the splendid old axiom which runs: The profit is in the last third of the dozen. As thousands of retail merchants have found to their sorrow, it is the last four of the dozen, even the last two of the dozen, that are the slowest and hardest to sell. The merchant must buy in quantity to get the best price, and to keep his freight and express costs

down; he must sell in quantity to pay for his goods, and to meet the running expenses of his store. And he is dependent for such quantity selling upon a public that buys as a school of fish bites—capriciously, undependably, and with sudden shifts of taste. Let some professor compute the profit now locked up in auction-bridge score-pads, gathering dust in thousands of American stores because the demand has changed to contract. Or that represented by slow-moving single-deck card-packs, because the fancy has shifted to double-packs. The figures will give him a headache, but they may help him realize why the apparent profit on various items of merchandise runs so high. And why it varies so widely on different items in the same store.

### III

No doubt about it: the question of retail price and profit is, to use a favorite phrase of General Hugh Johnson, a tough nut to crack. It never has been cracked satisfactorily. Perhaps the most rigid price control ever recorded in American business history was that exercised by the Victor Talking Machine Company in its heyday. The Victor product had quality and high public acceptance; the retail prices set by the company were also quite fair, and satisfied the public. They were designed to yield the dealer a 66  $\frac{2}{3}$ % markup on the cost of his goods or, as more commonly figured, a uniform 40% gross profit on his retail sales.

Until the Sherman Act interfered, those prices were strictly maintained. The company also protected its trade by avoiding marked style changes, and by a system of elaborate and costly exchanges, whereby obsolete or slow-moving merchandise (such as popular records that had lost

vogue) was taken off the dealers' hands at the original cost. The company even went so far as to replace (again without loss to the dealer) all fire-damaged Victor merchandise, so that the market was never unsettled by fire sales. Yet with all that paternal effort no Victor dealer was ever able to maintain a full 40% as his gross profit. It was perfectly true that each \$100 instrument he sold cost him \$60, and that he made an apparent profit of \$40 on the sale. And it was equally true that his popular records cost him 45 cents and sold for 75; thus, seemingly, leaving him a profit of 30 cents on every one the public bought.

But strangely, his total figures over the year showed him no such percentage. The inevitable losses of storekeeping—by breakage, by theft, by shopworn merchandise, by bad bills, etc.—so cut into that percentage that it was a constant struggle in even the best run shops to maintain an average gross profit of 36% on sales. And out of that lower figure there had to be met the store expenses, which ran from 28% to 32% of the same sales, before net profit (or true profit) began. No fortunes were made in Victor retailing, but only livings, more or less comfortable. The wealthy Victor dealer was usually found to have made his money by lucky investment elsewhere.

It was due to the rigid mark-up that Victor later encountered its most trying and deadly competition. Following the war the public showed itself susceptible to the influence of elaborate store fixtures, and the phonograph trade invested heavily in new store fronts, costly interior trims and glass-topped counters. Manhattan broke out in a rash of gloomily magnificent Circassian-walnut music shops whose frescoed walls were guaranteed hand-painted, and whose record-booths were perfumed with attar of roses.

All this jumped expenses inevitably; it also tempted many dealers to add lines of competitive instruments whose manufacturers made up for a construction inferior to Victor's by a greater showiness of appearance and a much greater dealer profit. The prices for such merchandise were widely elastic; their talking points of superiority were madly amusing. I recall one phonograph that for its sales appeal relied heavily upon a horn lined with glittering mirrors—thus, the claim was, it faithfully reflected the human voice! The public believed it—at any rate, it bought.

The head of the Victor cabinet factory might take an ax to certain of those competitive machines, to show the Victor sales force, the Victor dealers, how cheaply, how shoddily, how undependably they were built in comparison with Victor. Nevertheless, the dealers found that the stuff sold, and that it most certainly raised their average of profit. What is more to the point, it did not sell on a cheaper basis than Victor; it sold at approximately the same price level. Victor advertising, Victor prestige, had set up in the public mind certain standards of quality as measured by price. That mind was willing to see a bargain in a phonograph that, for example, had a bigger, more glossy cabinet than a Victor of the same price; it was not willing to see a bargain in a cheaper machine.

Thus certain Victor dealers, looking over their sales, were moved to amazed profanity at the number of cheap competitive machines they had sold at the \$200 price level. A Victor Victrola of that price would have cost a dealer \$120; the competitive shoddy cost him, in some cases, as little as \$29.50. Priced at \$60, at \$100, the public shied off in distrust; but at \$175 and \$200 that same public bought happily. As the dealers put it, in self-defense: "*They make us gyp 'em!*"

## IV

To the experienced merchandiser there is no end to this mystery of retail price. The figure at which an article will sell readily is often found to have no relation whatever to its cost, and very little to its quality. Last Summer, for example, two stores a short distance apart bought quantities of the same item of merchandise, and at the same time. It was a toy that cost at wholesale \$8 a dozen; it was intended by the manufacturer to sell at \$12 a dozen, or \$1 apiece. Both stores bought at the same price; one bought a dozen, the other a half-dozen. The latter store priced its six at \$1; the store buying the dozen priced its lot at \$2 each.

Well, within a short time a check-up showed that the \$2 store had sold its entire dozen—and realized a 200% mark-up on cost, whereas the \$1 store had been able to sell only two of its half-dozen, and had thus not even covered its merchandise cost. Both stores were visited by many of the same customers. In one of them, and at one price, the article took; in the other, at a lower price, it did not. Has any professor an equation to fit that case? It is far from being exceptional.

It was just such facts that made Mr. Mellon's report of 1922 so valueless; they will also greatly affect the reports to be expected from the NRA consumer boards, when they turn from commodities to merchandise prices. The Altman store, for instance, may have been guilty (as Mr. Mellon's agents charged) of selling for \$150 a necklace whose cost was apparently a mere 12% of that figure. But was the necklace *worth* \$150? And would not the clientèle of the Altman jewelry department have sniffed in disdain if the price had been set at \$50? No doubt the Wanamaker hat aforesaid, by consumer board

standards, would have been more reasonably priced at \$5. But that would have been the price level of an ordinary store—and Wanamaker's is far from being ordinary. Surely, for Wanamaker exclusiveness, for Wanamaker *kudos* (and Mr. Whalen), the extra \$2 was a small overcharge to pay.

Even that china set from Macy's tells a similar tale to the experienced merchandiser. At the time it was sold the Macy store was making a strong effort to live down a reputation for mere cheapness. Shrewdly, it had come to see the advantage of rounding out its selling by featuring articles and prices that would draw a Park avenue clientèle in addition to its well-established patronage from Weehawken. Macy's was successful in that effort, surprisingly so; and the \$134 price on that china dinner set was no doubt part of the campaign. The real interest would be to know how many of such china sets Macy's bought—and sold at that price and profit. Though not, perhaps, to Park avenue.

No, the seasoned merchandiser does not see profiteering in such cases; he sees, rather, a skillful adaptation of prices to what the public expects. He knows that no merchant can sell above that expectation; he knows also that sales are lost if prices run too much below it. And the expectation-level varies even in two stores side by side on the same street. Some critics maintain that such things could not be if retail shops were government-operated. There is, however, good evidence to the contrary. The government is also in the retail business; it sells postage stamps at retail. About a year ago it pushed its main price level from two cents to three cents, which proved to be above the public's expectation. Not only did the public curtail its stamp purchases at the three-



cent rate; it also refused to be satisfied to any appreciable extent by the privilege of using a 1½ cent stamp on unsealed greeting cards. Two cents was its price expectation, and though government statisticians might compile figures of cost till they mounted to the moon, it remained dissatisfied and showed it in no uncertain way, with the result that a two-cent local rate has already been restored by a sadder and wiser government.

The truth is that whether in postage stamps or china sets or straw hats from London, the prices in retailing must be made to suit the public. Thus the test of a good price is not its relation to cost but rather the rate at which it moves the goods and gives consumer satisfaction. Pricing, in short, is largely empiricism and there is a famous case in point. The collapse of 1921, which occasioned the Mellon report, also brought on the great buyers' strike, in which men paraded the streets of the principal American cities clad in unaccustomed denim overalls as a protest against prices.

It was John Wanamaker, then still living, who broke that strike; he did it,

dramatically and effectively, with a 20% mark-down on his merchandise. That cut was not figured against cost, nor against quality; it was simply a feeling-out of the public mind. Had the public rejected it and persisted in the strike, Wanamaker was prepared to cut further; trade gossip at the time credited him with needing \$2,000,000 badly, to pay merchandise bills. But he did not have to cut further; he luckily struck, at the first blow, the figure that satisfied. A 10% cut would merely have irritated the public more, and 30% would have made it wonder about past profits; but 20% off made it forget its overall parades and rush to the Wanamaker stores to buy. Other merchants, following suit, offered even greater discounts, but with no better sales results. For the time 20% was the right figure; it met perfectly the public expectation.

So in the last analysis the public makes its own prices; it makes also, if you please, its own profiteering. It does so whimsically, inscrutably, without seeming rhyme or reason; its ways fit no cost-and-profit formula. Therein lies the great mystery of retail price.

# MUSICAL SLAUGHTER-HOUSE

BY EDWARD ROBINSON

WHEN the ushers of the Metropolitan Opera-House stood at their posts one windy night last March, and with outstretched hands solicited alms from the passing customers, there were few witnesses who doubted the gravity of the institution's financial plight, or who suspected for a moment that there might be mirth behind a scene apparently so serious. The great Morgans and Vanderbilts and Belmonts had announced, with admirable candor, that they no longer had enough money to keep the house going. It was a simple confession, presented without false shame, and its effect was not only to focus the issue with unblinking clarity, but to forestall any possible skepticism.

A wave of public sympathy arose. The Metropolitan was a great artistic institution operated primarily for the public good, and it seemed only fair that the beneficiaries should help raise a guarantee fund of \$300,000. Upon the presentation of this suggestion, indeed, the cheers throughout the country grew deafening. Miss Lucrezia Bori's charming appeals from the stage and on the radio, aided by patriotic exhortations from press and pulpit, soon turned the campaign into a conflagration. Even the closely-guarded coffers of the Juilliard School were pried open for a contribution, and in a few weeks the widows and orphans listening on the radio from Maine to Texas had sent in enough pennies to make up the balance.

Opera was thus saved for the people,—

but what there was about it that deserved salvation no one bothered to explain. The sudden and unprecedented appeal to the public, moreover, was a suspicious business that grew stranger the more one reflected upon it. That a group of the nation's wealthiest people should be unable among them to raise \$300,000 did not seem quite plausible. The history of their previous conduct in operatic affairs, in fact, made such a protestation quite ridiculous. From the time the first Italian opera-house was built in 1833, opera had been maintained in New York as an institution of fashionable society. The cost of its upkeep had run into millions of dollars, but it had always been paid willingly by the plutocracy as the price of its prestige. The \$150,000 needed to erect that first opera-house was obtained by selling its boxes at \$6,000 apiece to the most prominent social figures in the community. They were thus able to stage probably the swankiest show on the Atlantic seaboard, and the loss of \$30,000 in the first season, cheerfully paid by the boxholders, was a trifle soon forgotten.

All subsequent operatic enterprises followed exactly the same pattern. A group of 150 social luminaries built the Astor Place Opera-House in 1847, and guaranteed its expenses for five years; and when, in 1854, the Academy of Music succeeded it, the boxholders put up the money for the new building, and took a loss of \$60,000 in the first season without blinking an eye. Thereafter a variety of managers,

from Maretzek to Mapleson, chalked up deficits whose amounts the patrons didn't even bother to make known. The larger the bills, the greater their sense of power and pomp, and for thirty years the Academy was thus haughtily subsidized as the town's leading citadel of fashion.

Not a single basic factor was altered when W. K. Vanderbilt, Tillinghast, Drexel and G. G. Haven led a gang of *nouveaux riches* in building the present Metropolitan in 1883. The inception of the new institution rested solely on the fact that the Academy crowd refused to relinquish their boxes to the upstarts. But the Metropolitan had younger and richer men to support it, and after two years of competition costly to both, the older fortress was finally battered into oblivion.

The money spent since then to maintain its pretentious splendors is probably beyond calculation. Abbey and Schoeffel lost \$600,000 in the very first season, and during the next seven years German opera ran up a debt of \$80,000. Abbey and Grau then re-introduced Italian opera, and at the end of the 1895-6 season were bankrupt. The extent of their losses is indicated in the fact that William Steinway, only one of the many creditors, alone advanced \$50,000.

Conried, the next impresario, managed to make off with so much of the patrons' money that they forced him to resign in 1908. When, in 1909, they announced their willingness to cover Gatti-Casazza's deficit of over \$300,000, they admitted at the same time that their losses in the previous year had been almost as great. Hammerstein's brilliant rivalry during the next two years ran the costs into tremendous sums, never revealed; but it is known that at the end, the Metropolitan had to buy off his further competition for the staggering amount of \$1,200,000.

The backers were not content, however, with such purely local expenditures. Apparently unlimited in resources, and itching to give further display of their wealth and power, they conceived the idea of a national operatic dominion under their control. The Boston Opera Company, founded in 1908 as an affiliated body, was supported through seven losing years, and the petition of bankruptcy in 1915 disclosed a deficit of more than \$200,000. In 1910, Otto Kahn, Clarence Mackay and some other New York adventurers struck west to found the Chicago Grand Opera Company, with Harold McCormick and Julius Rosenwald as their local lieutenants. The new organization paid Klaw and Erlanger \$100,000 for their lease on the Auditorium Theatre, which had housed a losing vaudeville project, and which had previously been offered to Hammerstein for nothing. A series of losses ending in \$250,000 for the 1913-4 season finally threw the company into bankruptcy. The Chicago boys, under Sam Insull and Harold McCormick, went on to lose many of their own millions; but the New York contingent had had enough, and returned to concentrate on home territory.

The amount of money spent on the Metropolitan itself will be finally charted when it is remembered that, wholly apart from the various producing deficits, a regular subsidy is annually contributed by the members of the owning company. The Metropolitan is a corporation the worth of whose property has averaged about \$7,000,000. This is divided among thirty-five boxholders at an investment of \$200,000 each, and the interest on that money—conservatively placed at \$280,000—represents an annual donation. Each boxholder also pays about \$1,000 taxes a year, and in addition is annually assessed about \$3,000 for operating expenses. The house is given to the

producing company rent free, and the only financial return consists of free seats to the performances. It will thus be seen that, regardless of box-office returns, the patrons have contributed a total fixed charge of about \$400,000 a year; and it is this which has kept the Diamond Horseshoe glittering for so many decades.

## II

In view of the enormous extravagance thus followed as a deliberate policy, it was absurd for anyone to accept last Winter's wail of poverty at its face value. Less than two years earlier the same group of backers were ready to spend millions on the erection of a new opera-house. Their reason for the abandonment of those plans was never satisfactorily disclosed, and it should have been obvious that something more than mere financial reverses had precipitated the public appeal for funds and disturbed the company's equilibrium.

The truth of the matter was that an internecine war had brought the patrons to an *impasse* which they hoped to escape by using the public as a buffer. At a testimonial dinner to Scotti, back in January, 1924, Otto Kahn had started the trouble by suggesting that the Metropolitan move to new quarters. He should have known better. All criticism of the "old barn" had been ignored contemptuously for more than a quarter of a century, and it was little short of treason for one of the inner circle to join the carpers. Lurking social opposition to Kahn, besides, had existed ever since he entered on the scene in 1909; and his proposal was not calculated to appease the hostility of the ancient dignitaries whose pride in the institution went back to the early days of its prestige.

The dauntless banker nevertheless assembled a \$3,000,000 plot of land in 57th

street near Ninth avenue, and in January, 1926, offered this as the site for the new opera-house, claiming that antiquated stage facilities, the need for better public accommodations, and the problems of traffic and management made an immediate move imperative. R. Fulton Cutting, head of the Real Estate Company, immediately objected, stoutly holding that the old house was adequate in every way. To gain popular support, Kahn stated in the press on January 22, 1926, that plans for the new house sought to make a modern auditorium, with special attention to the requirements of the public in the cheaper sections. The details concluded with the fatal statement, however, that "the new opera-house will not feature the boxes, as the present one does."

Anyone familiar with operatic history in New York could have foretold that Kahn was headed for disaster. An opera-house not featuring the boxes? The jolted stockholders did not actually say the man was crazy, but they organized to put him down; and a slow and subtle war dragged on for months and years. Flimsy pretexts were used as the basis for intermittent objections to the new site, and by February, 1927, a vote disclosed that many favored a "more monumental" building, *i.e.*, more boxes. By July it was public knowledge that Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt and Robert W. Goelet had been leading the opposition, and their inevitable victory was concluded on February 20, 1928, when Kahn announced that he had given up the 57th street plot for good.

After that, various abortive schemes were periodically advanced, until the move to Rockefeller's paradise on Fifth avenue was officially announced on December 26, 1928. The new scheme received bales of publicity, and the pretense that it would be carried out was continued until Adolf Lewis-

ohn sent a letter to the *Times* on March 3, 1929, stating that a new house was unnecessary, its future problematical, and the expense a sheer waste. Several months elapsed, and then, on December 6, 1929, the Rockefeller plan was suddenly dropped, with the explanation that completion could not be made before 1931, and that two years was too long to wait!

No further plans appeared, and there was ominous silence for over a year. On October 27, 1931, Kahn resigned as chairman of the directing board of the Metropolitan Opera Company. When Mrs. August Belmont became a member of the same board two years later, the *Times* featured the story on its front page with a long account of her stage career, her marriage, and her influential position in society. But after he had been the leading figure in the producing company for more than twenty years Kahn's resignation got but three-quarters of a column in the second section of the same newspaper.

The episode was not yet closed. The public could not be let down without a decisive deflection of its interest, and on March 25, 1932, the directors suddenly moaned that the future of the opera was in doubt, and that they were debating whether or not to continue. This shocker was allowed to germinate for a year, and on February 10, 1933, came the announcement that large deficits made a \$300,000 guarantee fund necessary for the next season. Had anyone troubled to investigate matters, certain stubborn inconsistencies might have been uncovered. Thus, on April 15, 1928, receipts for the season had topped \$3,000,000,—the best showing in the Metropolitan's history. Kahn himself stated on April 14, 1930, that while the Depression had caused a few difficulties, the attendance for the season had nevertheless been only a little less than the best previ-

ous showing. The largest crowd in three years besieged the box-office on October 23, 1930, for tickets to the opening night, and the subscriptions for the new season came "within a shade" of the record.

It is therefore remarkable that after several years of peak receipts the company should have been as doubtful of its ability to continue. The official explanations referred vaguely to a reserve fund which "the Depression had wiped out"; but this was variously placed at from less than \$1,000,000 to more than \$1,500,000, and no one seemed quite sure about it. Furthermore, an account of the Gatti jubilee celebration on February 27, 1933, let slip the fact that this reserve fund had been used not only to weather the Depression, but also in large part to balance the losses of the unsuccessful seasons with the Imperial Russian Ballet.

But the Russian Ballet had appeared in 1912 and 1916! Abbey's losses back in 1883 might just as well have been "balanced" as these. Obviously, this was another blind to conceal a purpose that must now be apparent. The opera company wanted to test the public reaction to its status as leader of the fashionable art world. Kahn's campaign for a new house, while it failed of its purpose, had aroused a good deal of sympathy; and the conservative stockholders were left in doubt about their ability to preserve their prestige. There was—and still is—enough money in their combined resources to see the Metropolitan through a half dozen Depressions in a row. Their appeal for funds was only a bid for a vote of confidence. A public contribution would be tacit approval of their determination to stay in the old building and run their show in the old way. The zeal with which their cause was taken up provided the final note of homage which they wanted to hear before going on with plans for the opera.



## III

The lamentable aspect of the whole affair lies not only in the fact that the public was taken for a good ride, but that, as a result, the Metropolitan will continue to function in the future as it has in the past. No serious musician can view this as anything but a dreadful and hopeless prospect. The Metropolitan has always been controlled by a crew of cultural featherweights who know nothing about the art of music drama, and who care less about its development and destiny. Their official proclamations about maintaining superlative "artistic standards" for the public's education and improvement are smug nonsense. They spend their money simply for fashionable social distraction, and only an occasional accident ever turns their productions into anything more.

Often enough, they have publicly exposed the ignorant barbarism of their attitude. The noise and laughter in the boxes became enough of a nuisance to the rest of the audience in 1891 to provoke a raging newspaper controversy. One of the directors replied to the objections by intimating that a boxholder who had paid \$3,000 for his seat had a right to talk as loudly as he pleased. But the scandal grew so great that on January 22, 1891 the directors were forced to hang the following printed notice in each box:

Many complaints having been made to the directors of the Opera-House of the annoyance produced by the talking in the boxes during the performance, the board requests that it be discontinued.

The same group of patrons insisted that the house be illuminated throughout the performance, since otherwise they would be unable to see each other. The stage lights were turned on in full force even during the dungeon scene of "Fi-

delio"; and when Florestan exclaimed, "Gott! welch' Dunkel hier!" the preponderantly German audience almost stopped the show with its laughter. At another time, the chairman of the amusement committee requested that the last act of "Die Meistersinger" be sung first, since it was "the only act of the opera that had music in it," and the boxholders did not want to wait until the end.

In a speech at the Metropolitan on the opening night, Sir Augustus Harris, who was the financial backer in 1895 for the first New York production in English of Humperdinck's "Hänsel und Gretel", referred to the composer as "Mr. Humperdinckel," and to the opera as "some beautiful music composed for this occasion." When Gatti's appointment seemed to foretell a confirmed Italian policy, the good Mr. Kahn sought to allay apprehensions by having the newspaper critics meet a Count Centanini, who made a long speech extolling the new impresario as the gentleman responsible for the appreciation of Wagner in Italy. Actually, all of Wagner's operas had been produced there from ten to twenty years before Gatti ever went to Milan; and the count turned out to be an opera coach who had once accompanied some singers at the Metropolitan. The same Kahn, whose æsthetic pronouncements have always been very profound and very wrong, after the first performance of Damrosch's "Cyrano de Bergerac" thought that it would stay in the repertory of the Metropolitan permanently. It has just five performances in 1913, and has never reared its head since.

All the artistic and financial policies of the Metropolitan are subservient to the childish buffoonery of these patrons, whose bulging pocketbooks and empty heads constitute an open invitation to charlatans only too eager to quarry the former by

obeying the wishes of the latter. The managers and musicians hired to satisfy their desires have therefore only rarely been self-respecting and independent artists; and the record of their incompetence, hypocrisy, and even outright dishonesty runs into endless volumes of scandal, both public and private.

Thus, at a rehearsal of "Die Walküre," Conried railed at the light man for disobeying the instructions of the prompt-book, and had himself to be corrected with the information that a different act from the one he was reading was in progress on the stage. As a gesture toward the more civilized auditors, he brought over Felix Mottl, famous conductor, and Lautenschläger and Fuchs, eminent stage technicians, especially to handle the German productions in 1903. But all three were so hampered by the slipshod methods of preparation that they resigned after the first season in humiliation and disgust. The same impresario, in his five-year tenure, lifted the costs of production to outrageous heights, openly continued the custom of benefit nights from which the manager personally pocketed the proceeds, and so fouled the atmosphere with numerous other operations that only his forced resignation prevented a public row.

The succeeding administration was not much better. An elaborate system of ticket speculating finally got into the courts with the Tyson scandal of 1913. Speculating continues to this day, and so recently as May 20, 1927, during testimony in a damage suit brought by a discharged Metropolitan dancer, it was testified that hundreds of tickets had disappeared from the box-office during the season, only to be resold later by outside agencies. In 1911, Tito Ricordi's ill-advised attempt to extend opera throughout the country focused attention on the fact that the Italian publishing firm

of which he was the head drew large royalties not only on Puccini's operas, but on a strangely large number of the Metropolitan's novelties as well.

On the artistic side, men like Anisfeld and Soudekine, the scene painters, and Mielziner and Urban, the stage designers, have regularly had their best efforts choked by the routine and pedestrian management with which they were confronted. The vaunted directorial judgment hailed Josef Rosenstock with loud acclaim as the new conductor of German opera in 1929, although the man's inadequacy was so plain that he had to retire three weeks after his first appearance. Toscanini found conditions in the 39th street emporium such, that despite a salary of \$40,000 a season, he quit in 1915 and has never returned since.

The hair-pulling and shin-cracking antics of the Metropolitan stars have been front-page copy, of course, for many years. Their infantile conduct drew an editorial rebuke from the *Musical Courier* so long ago as 1903, when the "talking and laughter on the stage," and the general burlesquing of rôles were found to be a "public disgrace." The enormous salaries paid for their spectacular services have aroused popular protest for almost a century, and the secrecy about the amounts is more than a confession of guilt. It was only when the Chicago Company went bankrupt in 1915 that Mary Garden's twenty-week honorarium of \$80,000, Tetrazinni's of \$56,000, Dalmores's of \$40,000 and Bassi's of \$36,000 came to light. In New York the scale has naturally been even higher. Caruso received over \$2,000 a night, Jean de Reszke got \$2,500 in addition to 25% of the receipts above \$6,000, and Gigli revealed in a fit of temper last year that the poverty-stricken Metropolitan had been paying him \$100,000 a season.

## IV

It would be ridiculous to expect that an organization resting on a structure basically so crude and preposterous should produce anything of vital artistic significance. The Metropolitan is essentially an imitative institution, deriving its material from European sources, and taking its cues from leaders in every other part of the world. No new work of real musical importance has ever originated within its walls. No new composer of genuine intellectual and artistic attainments has ever found shelter in it. The Americans it has sponsored have been incompetent, and its welcome to contemporary foreign composers has rarely aimed higher than the tawdry level of Puccini and Mascagni.

The guiding policy of the institution has been to hire the most famous names in the musical world, and to ignore everything else. Its own officials have always boasted that the Metropolitan has enough money to buy practically anyone it pleases, and without doubt its pride and reputation rest almost entirely on this power. Certainly, the quality of its productions would by itself earn no niche of fame. The stage management has the imagination and adroitness of a burlesque show, and the scenery has been the despair of all enlightened designers. A haggard and overworked orchestra just about manages to play the notes, and the old hand-flapping, heart-heaving type of acting on display would not do justice to a grammar-school charade.

Singers with the wooden inflexibility of Rosa Ponselle, the screechy vulgarity of Maria Jeritza, or the mechanical dexterity of Lily Pons are acclaimed as eminent luminaries of vocal and dramatic art. The atmosphere of the performances is stuffed with such unbearable ponderosity, and the tempo of production is so flat-footed, that

even the finest works in the repertory are battered into travesties. For years a tenor like Laubenthal was encouraged to turn the German operas into nightmares, and only the occasional relief of such intelligent artists as Whitehill and Meader made it possible to sit through the more serious works without pain.

The list of the company's productions would alone earn complete damnation in the eyes of even moderately civilized music-lovers, for the essential artistic contribution of the Metropolitan has been to preserve operas like "Aïda" and "Pagliacci" from an oblivion that should have been theirs on the night they first appeared. A purely statistical analysis shows that the preponderant diet has consisted of the worst kind of drivel, and that those works which are acknowledged masterpieces have been practically ignored.

It is startling, thus, to learn that Weber's "Euryanthe," one of the most remarkable of all operas, has been played in New York just ten times. Written in 1823, it received its first American performance in 1862 by a German company under Carl Anschütz. It was not heard again until Seidl gave it four readings in 1887; and since then only five performances, under Toscanini in 1914, have been heard at the Metropolitan. Two other masterpieces by the same composer have fared only a little better. "Der Freischütz" was given its first important American production when Leopold Damrosch revived it in 1884. It was a complete failure, and did not re-appear on the list for twenty-six years. Gatti revived it in 1910, but has since staged it only sixteen times. "Oberon," written in 1826, was not produced at the Metropolitan until 1918, and has received but thirteen hearings since.

Beethoven's "Fidelio", surely one of the abiding operas of all time, has received

seventeen performances during Gatti's twenty-five-year stay, and in the fifteen years preceding was heard but eight times. Gluck's great "Orfeo ed Eurydice" used to be given occasionally in the period before Gatti,—as a curtain-raiser for "Cavalleria Rusticana"! In the past twenty-five years it has been produced twenty times, but the same composer's "Iphigenie auf Tauris" has received but five performances in all.

The figures on Mozart's works are incredible. Some of the operas, such as "Idomeneo" and "Die Entführung aus dem Serail," have never been given at all. Of the great masterpieces, "Cosi fan Tutte" did not appear in this country until 1922, and the Metropolitan has since given it but twelve performances. In fifteen years under Grau and Conried, "Don Giovanni" appeared twenty times, "Die Zauberflöte" fourteen times, and "Le Nozze di Figaro" sixteen times. "Don Giovanni" remained out of Gatti's list for twenty-one years, and since its revival in 1929 it has been heard but twelve times. In the Gatti period, "Figaro" has been given eleven times, and only "Die Zauberflöte" has made a tolerable showing with thirty-three presentations.

"Falstaff" and "Otello"—the two operas of Verdi's maturity and the only ones worthy of respect from serious musicians—have been pitiable failures from their initial appearances. "Otello," written in 1887, was first produced by a special company organized by Italo Campanini in 1888. It lived through eight disastrous performances and then closed. The Metropolitan produced it two years later, and in the forty-three years that have elapsed since then has managed to give it twenty-eight times. "Falstaff" has received a total of twenty-seven performances since it was first produced in 1895.

Now, there have been over 4,000 New York performances in the twenty-five years

of Gatti's reign. The combined performances of all the great works just mentioned number 183, or less than 5% of the total. In contrast, here are the figures on some of the traditional organ-grinder's list: "Aïda," 180; "La Bohème," 160; "Cavalleria Rusticana," 125; "Mme. Butterfly," 148; "Pagliacci," 157; "Tosca," 132; "Faust," 97; "La Gioconda," 78; "Lucia di Lammermoor," 63; "Manon," 70; "Rigoletto," 98; "Il Trovatore," 81; "Traviata," 95. The performances of these works, with a few other Italian bloodcurdlers not mentioned, add up to about 50% of the total. Wagner's interminable allegories account for another 17 or 18%, and the balance is divided among occasional things like "Hänsel und Gretel" or "Der Rosenkavalier," and an inconsequential list of "novelties" heard a few times and promptly forgotten.

The wealth and energy of the Metropolitan's extensive resources have thus been frittered away upon banalities absurdly presented, and it is hence difficult to see how the institution can claim to be of any importance in the artistic life of the country. The various efforts to establish opera in English, and to encourage American compositions, have all been failures. Henry W. Savage's Castle Square Opera Company merged with the Metropolitan for a season in English during the Fall of 1900, but the attempt was unprofitable in every way, and was never repeated. In 1913 some of the leading patrons, in co-operation with the City Club, established the Century Opera Company for the purpose of giving productions in English. About half a million dollars was wasted on the enterprise, and it collapsed in the second season.

A wave of patriotism flared up in the directors' bosoms in 1910, and they began to dig for native operas by native sons. They squeezed out things like Converse's

"The Pipe of Desire," Parker's "Mona," and Damrosch's lumbering "Cyrano," and considered their consciences cleared. Thereafter, a new American work has every so often appeared on the Metropolitan stage amid great fanfares and jubilation; but certainly only a morbid desire to do public penance could possibly have motivated the production of those melancholy spectacles.

## V

A brilliant opportunity to blast all this imbecility into permanent extinction ached for fulfillment when the Metropolitan issued its appeal last Winter. Here was a chance, at last, to make effective protest against the institution which for many decades had been a major obstacle to the development of a truly indigenous American music. Not a finger of active exertion needed to be raised. The opera public had only to sit back in its seat, turn a stony front to the beggars, and its indifference would have blotted out a plague that had been festering for over a century.

Instead, the very victims who had previously broken their necks trying to see the stage from a seat in the Metropolitan gallery, themselves led the van in a mad scramble to rescue the tottering monstrosity. More than this: as if to dispel all possible doubt about their attitude, they stormed the doors of the Hippodrome in order to cheer fifth-rate performances of tenth-rate operas, while up at the Lewisohn Stadium Haydn and Brahms were being played to an empty amphitheatre. So pronounced was the discrepancy that

the Philharmonic had to stage "Carmen" and "Mme. Butterfly" in order to draw a decent attendance; and the exclusive symphonic character of its schedule—which was its chief distinction—is now seriously threatened for the future. The success of these popular experiments, as well as of the Metropolitan's public appeal, has given impetus to scores of similar operatic projects, and the outlook is for a local "Rigoletto" in every tank town throughout the country.

The American's capacity for enduring prolonged buffoonery never received more eloquent testimony than this. At the same time, the increasing hopelessness of our musical life was never more convincingly proven. The conclusion is inescapable that, far from harboring any resentment against it, the traditional operatic pageant is precisely the kind of idiocy which American audiences actively want. To them, the elephants and camels in "Aïda" are impressive examples of dramaturgical art, and Marguerite's "apotheosis" by Gounod is not a miserably vulgar pollution of Goethe's tragedy, but a profoundly exalted and mystical revelation. After years of effort to educate popular taste in the United States, Mozart is rejected as a bore, and Donizetti is discovered to be a great composer.

In the face of such depressing travesties, it is foolish to talk about the development of American music. We are confronted with a definite retrogression to a stage of appreciation that was supposed to have been passed fifty years ago. If there really is a genius for musical expression in American life, certainly this is not evidence of it.



# THEM ASSES

BY BOB BROWN

**M**ESSES! *Messes!*" Kind-faced old Piet Vlag, founder of the *Masses*, stood wrapped to the ears in a cheap overcoat, sniffing with his chronic cold in the draughty doorways of Cooper Union and all the other halls where mass-meetings and debates went on during that Winter of 1911.

"*Messes! Messes!*" he cried endlessly, poking out copies of the new little radical paper to all the passing parlor Socialists and Liberals, asking for ten cents worth of support in exchange. Forlorn and chilly as a Salvation Army Santa Claus, he hovered in those bleak halls, handing out armfuls of the magazine to good-looking girls who helped him, without pay, in the hawking.

Piet Vlag was a Dutchman come to America in middle life, already bent with altruistic labor, both physical and spiritual. His back stooped with his efforts to aid others in their struggle up. He had dedicated the little that was left of his broken life to spreading his private religion of coöperative stores. His *Masses* was a workers' magazine.

To picture its birth in that distant dawn, and the manger in which it was born, we must see the old Rand School and recall that the pink of the intelligentsia of the day, Branch 1 of the Socialistic party, which met in its brown-stone front basement, was getting its first sight of a real proletarian, a manual laborer in the flesh. The pinks were all in the Inter-Collegiate

Socialist Society and Branch 1, and their membership included a single carpenter as a sort of sample of the class they were out to save. This artisan, though lowly, was lovely to the boys and girls because he worked with his hands, which none of them ever had done. They hung open-mouthed on his words, fascinated by hearing first-hand of a truly hard life, so surprisingly different from their own.

The carpenter, in his turn, was much impressed by the big-eyed intelligentsia, and it was thus a liberal education on both sides. But they nearly ruined him with their adulation and their beer—indeed, they would have pickled him in alcohol if it hadn't been for his strong constitution, which comes down to us today in the hundreds of proletarian fists, biceps and torsos modelled by socially-aware artists immortalizing the ideal workman. It was from this carpenter, no doubt, that the myth arose that Jesus Christ was the first Socialist.

Into the circle stepped Piet Vlag, the second proletarian of whom the young high-brows were privileged to get intimate closeups, and study on the hoof. At the Rand School he was an instant success and found a ready-made colony of sympathizers, chiefly young artists of both sexes, sprung from the middle class of the mid-West, a few already tinged with a free-love inheritance from the followers of Robert Owen in Ohio and Indiana. Magnetized by Piet's fervor, these ardent

youths pitched in to help further his ideas. Indulgently, he let them decorate the first issues of his *Masses*, and help him lick the stamps and wrappers of that dangerous sheet, unique in an American press which, until then, had never shown any sign of "foreign radicalism."

The native-born Rand scholars were high-brow, yet not high hat. They were really the cream of the corn-fed intelligentsia that had begun to thrust its feelers out to New York, seeking fuller expression for its strange and uncomfortable talents and tendencies. Piet and his paper were just their dish—they liked it so well, in fact, that within a year they took it away from him. He was, to them, a breathless experience, an inspiration—but they could never get used to his outlandish accent. They petted him, but they mimicked his nasal snuffle, his newsboy cry of "*Messes! Messes!*", and his constant plea: "Ve must get girls, pretty guirls, plenty pretty guirls vor to sell der *Messes* efferwhere!" For all those newly-hatched pinks were American born and therefore foreign-accent conscious. At home they had heard nothing but the President's American; but now, through thick dialects like Piet's, they were becoming vaguely aware of internationalism.

So Piet became their brotherly Walt Whitman, their fatherly Horace Traubel—and their imported chef, for they made him cafeteria cook in the cellar, so that he could maintain himself without losing his ragged individualism. By rubbing shoulders with him they thrilled over the brotherhood of man, but because of his difficulty with English they got him to turn over the editorship of his paper to effervescing little Thomas Seltzer. And William Washburn Nutting, who lived in the Rand School attic and carved realistic crows, volunteered as art editor.

## II

Nutting, who later edited *Motor Boating* for Mr. Hearst and died at sea in a romantic round-the-world-in-a-motor-boat cruise after coming into \$100,000, may well serve as a type of the material that made the first *Masses*. He was a vital, steady, well-bred and talented better-seeker from Indiana, with a strong Gibson profile that attracted the girls. He came to New York for expansion and conquest, and was soon signing his letters home with the then popular "Yours for the Revolution!"—perchance the very revolution that is said to be taking place now, just twenty-three years on the way.

Old Piet had plugged along at his magazine after hours of concocting beef stew and pilaf in the cafeteria, and in the course of time he had got support for it from Art Young, the Sloans, John and Dolly, and the Winters, Charlie and Alice—all members of Branch 1, which also contributed "plenty pretty guirls vor to sell der *Messes* efferwhere." Two ardent volunteers were Rose Watson, principal of a select private school uptown, and Marjorie Hood, later a fashion artist. They helped to get circulation for America's first class-conscious magazine, and Piet, in his dumb proletarian way, gave as much credit to their foot work as to the helping heads and hands of the creative artists.

From the start the *Masses* was coeducational and coöperative. It championed woman suffrage and the down-and-outer, being very partial to bums and especially severe with Boy Scouts. In its very first year it was nearly ruined by secretly smoldering internal dissensions—too many editors spoilt that one-cook broth. The high-brows cried down Piet's coöperative store idea and wanted to run his paper their own way. He made a frantic effort to save

it by offering to combine it with a Chicago Socialist-suffrage organ, but the deal didn't come off and the coöperative stores were jettisoned. Then their inventor was pushed out in the cold, as so often happens in this devil-take-the-hindmost world, and his invention was taken over for development and exploitation by a conventional organization of stockholders—though in this case no profits, of course, were expected.

So after 1912 Piet was nevermore seen or heard in doorways sniffing "*Messes! Messes!*" His thin-necked orphan was legally adopted by seventeen foster-parents: Eugene Wood, Hayden Carruth, William Watson, André Tridon, George Allan England, Horatio Winslow, Maurice Becker, Arthur Young, Alexander Popini, Marjorie Hood, J. B. Larric, Layton Smith, Power O'Malley, Anton Otto Fischer, William W. Nutting, Charles A. Winter and Rose Greenberg, the last a paid employé of the Rand School. All were 100% Socialists, and the number of writers exactly balanced the artists.

This unwieldy mob of idealists held monthly make-up meetings, mostly at Charlie and Alice Winter's flat in 59th street. Them Asses, as they were jeeringly called by dissenters, through easy redivision of the paper's title, gathered at McSorley's earlier, or at Scheffel Hall, any place where the beer was good, and then journeyed uptown to the quiet Winter studio, where Maurice Becker sat beside the placid aquarium in the front window, making smudgy charcoal drawings of the assembly, their distinguishing whiskers, top-knots, and what-not.

The Winter aquarium was a Thoreauvian symbol that removed all city atmosphere miles into the countryside, and soft-pedalled the rattle of the passing trolley-cars. It branched with coral, breathed with sea-green plants, glinted with gold

fish, quirked with frogs' hind legs and turtle tails. Maurice, sitting beside it, was the youngest of the group, an East Side discovery of the childless Winters, who offered parentage to all orphaned life, whether turtles, artists or magazines. Maurice looked more Italian than Jew; his face was lit with the inside sun of a Raphael cherub and he had an angelic disposition that exactly matched it. But this disposition only ripened during his later strafing in Leavenworth for the pacifist cartoons he drew for the *Masses*.

Them Asses were quite indifferent to the popular derision which greeted their efforts. The hurling of tin tomahawks only tickled them, and they adopted Them Asses as a suitable substitute for the pompous editorial We. Eventually I became one of them myself—but only after a long struggle with my Methodist conscience. At the time Piet Vlag started the paper I was a go-getting free-lance in New York, quite as typical of my nothing-succeeds-like-success class as William W. Nutting was of his socially enlightened brotherhood. Nutting and I had been brought up Summer-times with only one house between our backyards. We carried our kid friendship to New York, so it was through him that I first heard of the *Masses*—and frankly, I didn't give a damn.

Horatio Winslow and Berton Braley were Damon and Pythias seniors at the University of Wisconsin when I was a freshman, and on my arrival to conquer Manhattan I found them still closely associated as editors of *Puck*. I was glad to see their stuff printed in the big-time magazines, among them the *Saturday Evening Post*, which was then beginning to get everybody's nickels. In the few years that followed I lost track of Horatio and was shocked to find him, in 1912, descended from *Puck* to the editorship of the

obscure *Masses* in an awful little attic office down-town. He looked cramped there, a giant folded up like an undertaker's chair in that bare room, getting out single-handed the small liverish magazine that looked indigestible to my caviare taste. He handed me a sample copy. I stuck it deep in my pocket so that when I got outside nobody would catch me with it—and I threw it in the first ash-can.

Horatio informed me that he had succeeded Piet Vlag and Seltzer in the post and was happy, even on a wage no greater than that of a proletarian weaver under the Blue Eagle. He even wore a workman's shirt and called people Comrade, as Bill Nutting also did. The sprightly spirit of dollar-conquest which had dominated my career until then wilted a bit on finding Horatio satisfied with such a humble state of slump. But I still yearned to jerk him out of that stool-sitting, and get him back into a white collar and a building with an elevator. I itched to do something to make him class-conscious again, for his backsliding was plainly a reflection on me and my kind. What had we all gone to colletch for? To wear an ice-man's shirt on the campus might be excused, but in later life neffer, as Piet would have said. I asked him how come, fearing to hear a pitiful tale of hard luck or some devastating love defeat.

But not so. Horatio turned on me and my worldly intrusion the mildly fanatic eye of a great humanitarian and spoke seriously of Socialism, the new religion in which he had found a greater life purpose than in mere commercialism. I laughed it off. My father was a Republican, my mother a Democrat, and we'd had enough trouble over that without my considering a third party. Socialism definitely didn't lead where I was headed. I dismissed it along with the Holy Rollerism, anarchism,

Swedenborgianism and all the other quaint kinks in the lunatic fringe of opinion. Out of Horatio's office, down the rickety stairs I stumbled, shaking my head over a fallen hero, for he had been an honor man in Latin, and we had all expected Homeric things from him, or at least Horatio Algeric.

### III

This was the period when the *Masses* was being supported modestly by Rufus Weeks, a conventional executive in a big capitalistic business, yet, curiously enough, a believer in free speech. He was one of those sports that nature sometimes surprises herself by shooting off in a playful moment, just to prove how unconventional she is at heart. (John Quinn, the Philadelphia lawyer and art patron, was another such. Quinn stepped out of his class to collect John Sloan's radical paintings when they were still thought crude, and he defended the *Little Review* in its censorship mess over "Ulysses.") There was, too, Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, whose contributions put the *Masses* finally on its feet. Such rare Clarence Darrows and Theodore Dreisers pop up unexpectedly, one or two in every decade.

Weeks was meticulously groomed, mild of eye and manner. He wore an elegant beard tinged with grey, and gloves. He was the antithesis of Piet Vlag, yet they were brothers. He soon faded out of the picture even as Vlag had, and the *Masses* was again up against it, in the Fall of its second year.

About that time I ran into Bruce Barton, another school-mate, in Union Square. Bruce was looking kind of seedy, for this was before he got the bright idea of *Every Week* and began to compete with the *S. E. P.* for a while. I don't mean to imply

that he was on the bum, but his trousers and shoes were suspiciously high in shine, and job-hunger darted in his steely blue eye. The *Housewife*, of which he had recently been editor, had folded, and he was looking for another post.

"What's this new magazine, the *Masses*?" he asked me. "Isn't their office around here somewhere? I heard they're looking for an editor."

I gave him the address and said that so far as I knew Horatio was still on the job. I don't know whether he applied or not. Anyway, the editorship soon passed to Max Eastman, with no pay at the start, and I've sometimes wondered whether Bruce would have taken it on those terms, and what would have happened to the magazine if he had.

In December, 1912, the *Masses* shed its infant skin and appeared full grown on the newsstands with double-page cartoons, twenty pages in big format. That was an auspicious rebirth, and the January, 1913, issue proclaimed:

This magazine is now a success. Thanks to the cordial enthusiasm of those who liked the December number, and the equally cordial denunciation of those who did not, we are no longer in doubt. Our appeal for a loan was very nearly met by voluntary subscriptions, and the contributing editors made up the remainder among themselves.

The legal reorganization of the company is not quite completed and we have to print this month the former list of stockholders. But the magazine will belong to its editors and be published by them as a coöperative enterprise.

A revolutionary and not a reform magazine, a magazine with no dividends to pay, a free magazine, frank, arrogant, impertinent, searching for the true causes, a magazine directed against rigidity and dogma wherever it is found, printing what is too naked or true for a money-making press, a magazine whose final policy is to do as it pleases and conciliate nobody, not

even its readers—there is room for this publication in America.

In all this the fine Italian hand of Eastman is easily recognized—the satirical pen that flows on today in titles like "Bull in the Afternoon" for his review of Hemingway's latest. He had just resigned from Columbia under pressure for his radical opinions, doubtless inherited from his parents, both of whom were Unitarian ministers. He was then writing poetry, and "The Enjoyment of Poetry" for the Scribners. But he led off the revitalized *Masses* with straight-from-the-shoulder prose under the heading of "Knowledge and Revolution," and he added to the already distinguished art staff Robert Henri, George Bellows, W. Glackens, Jo Davidson and a lot of emerging kids—among them, Stuart Davis, Glenn Coleman, Cornelia Barns, K. R. Chamberlain and W. H. Glittenkamp.

Horatio stuck on as a contributor with a back page of comment, "The Way You Look At It." But for a while the art had to carry the somewhat heavy text of William English Walling, Bolton Hall, Arturo Giovannitti, Rose Pastor Stokes, Lincoln Steffens, Carlo de Fornaro, Allen L. Benson, Upton Sinclair and Leroy Scott.

Max, however, already taking notes for "What is Humor and Why?" soon made the text march with the pictures in liveliness. He put in social satire by Gelett Burgess, Will Herford, Howard Brubaker, Ellis O. Jones (*Life*), Eugene Wood (father of Peggy), even Homer Croy and F. P. A. He put *Puck* back into Horatio and got Art Young to double at text and pictures, while John Sloan, the sharpest Hogarth of them all, thought up convulsive captions, the best of them, of course, unprintable. Max and Sloan complemented each other. Together, their wits were combustible; they struck fire.



Within a few months Max had the liveliest magazine in America and it wasn't long before *Everybody's* was buying full-page ads in it and Norman Hapgood was trying to turn *Harper's Weekly* into the same furrow. Hapgood hired the artists whose "illustrations in the *Masses*," he said, "have a higher average interest than those in any other periodical in this country." His conversion was more painless than most, for his brother Hutchins and sister-in-law Neith Boyce were dyed-in-the-wool radicals of the *Masses* fold. But the readers of *Harper's Weekly* didn't agree with their editor, and its circulation dropped to a chill point where, in order to continue paying dividends, Hapgood had to return to the stereotyped stuff of that soggy pre-movie, pictorial day.

#### IV

For a time two Maxes ran the *Masses*. The second, Max Endicoff, was taken on as an office boy and turned out to be a poet. He was treated as an equal, and his free verse, as good as anybody's, was published alongside that of the professionals. Then Floyd Dell was imported from Chicago to do the active pasting up. Fair enough for Max and Floyd to be paid, said the editors to whom the paper belonged in theory, though in practice it was Max's quite as much as *Hampton's* was Mr. Hampton's, or *Scribner's* Mr. Scribner's.

Berkeley Tobey came in as business manager, replacing Dolly Sloan, who continued as unpaid treasurer. There was, by now, money in the till. New quarters were taken in Greenwich avenue, with plenty of room for the monthly make-up meetings, which didn't make-up any more, forgetting an editress's lip-stick or two. The contributing editors met, however, twenty strong, to solemnly vote Aye and Nay,

and were, of course, surprised to find their decisions reversed by the reigning powers when the magazine came out. Editorial exigencies, explained Max and Floyd, wiping off subtle smiles.

So the coöperative got out of group control, and success brought its own skids under its arm and took the *Masses* for a sleigh-ride. From the younger artists came complaints of high handedness and inequality of reward. There was a sharp division between the arrived professionals and these kids who hadn't a nickel to buy a stick of charcoal. John Sloan was the only one of the older outfit who thought they should receive at least a nominal \$5 or \$10 for their drawings that were bringing enthusiastic press clippings into the office.

Max thought not, and this argument over the root led to discord and the final disruption of the harmonic old *Masses*. While things were still smiling on the surface there were ugly rumblings underneath, and Max, being no namby-pamby, rode roughshod over all suggestions and criticisms, and ran things to suit himself.

But if anybody felt peeved at being left out of the eats, he was cheered up by the free drinks at the fascinating meetings that Max always pulled off on schedule. They were almost salons. Max, a born stage manager, with a remarkable platform presence, had Floyd for his property man. Theatric Floyd was already turning out one-act plays ("King Arthur's Socks") and showing other signs of the dramatic sense that later blossomed in "Little Accident." As Gog and Magog he and Max put on a nifty brother act, covered up all little accidents of commission and omission, and made the artists, notoriously guileless, happy in this play at collaboration.

The business of selecting and rejecting was got over as soon as possible, since it didn't mean a thing. Then the office boy

rushed the growler and Art Young got off his impersonation of a bucolic Senator. Floyd sat on the editorial desk and sang, "I don't care where the water goes, just so it doesn't get into the wine." Clement Wood, the troubadour, brought his mandolin and a different gal every night. He sang and recited, mostly Vachel Lindsay or himself. Sloan sat sparkle-eyed, getting off cosmic wise-cracks.

Max, the gracious host, fraternized with everybody down to the office cat, in his lackadaisical, whimsical manner: a toss-haired, smile-smoldering big brother to all the oppressed. Yet he was quick as a teacher at cutting down with his rapier tongue young members of the chorus who piped up with leading questions and other impertinences.

Unkempt Harry Kemp, lolling on the floor, grinned at some visiting doll, reading her his latest poem. Louis Untermeyer was there always, and sometimes B. Russel Herts, both lending of their elegance. Louis looked like an old master, got up gallantly, peering through his pince-nez at the drawings tacked all over the walls, and carrying a copy of his poems in a hand-tooled case as reverently as though it were the Talmud. There were plenty of poets: Witter Bynner, William Rose Benét and others climbed down from their solid-ivory towers. Lots of agitators, too: vehement Dolly Sloan, energetic, arguing at high speed, and so short she needed the lift of the corner soap-box to complete her.

Stuart Davis's thoughtful gargoyle face with the submerged smile quaking. Jack Reed, fiery, rumpling his hair, striding, dynamic, a real revolutionist. Glenn Coleman, over-thin, expressing himself in cackles and wisps of words from stretched rubber-band lips. Glintencamp, the burly Robin Good Fellow, with a pair of glad

eyes for a brace of gals, and a greenwood thirst. Cornelia Barns, earnest little mother to all young artists. Lanky Eugene Wood, who conducted the *Masses* Bible Class—hell on religion. And the other Wood, Erskine Scott, of "Heavenly Discourses."

Max's wife, Ida Rauh, kept things collegiate, even scholastic, with her coldly serious mien, pointing piercing argument through the first horn-rimmed glasses ever glimpsed in the Village. Beautiful Lydia Gibson lounged, for decor—keeping up Piet Vlag's tradition of plenty pretty gurls.

Howard Brubaker lived out of town and seldom showed up, but though William English Walling resided deep in Connecticut, he was always on hand with his Syndicalist grin. Ellis O. Jones, whose father before him had fought for free speech in Ohio, tried to turn Central Park into a Hyde Park, but the city fathers weren't sympathetic. Mary Heaton Vorse, who lived handy. Sometimes Lincoln Steffens or Charles Edward Russell. Bill Haywood, Bob Minor. An eager-minded outfit, all talking at once, mostly suggesting captions for the thumb-tacked drawings—anything with a sting to lash *laissez-faire*.

A bum looking at a Nut Sundae ad: "Ash Wednesday," he muses, "Shrove Tuesday. Good Friday—Say, this is a new one on me." . . .

"Who gave you that black eye?"

"Who gives me anything? I had to fight for it." . . .

"That's right, girls, on Sunday the cross—on week-days the double cross." . . .

The cook-and-mistress joke humanized:

Mistress: "Kate, if a woman more intelligent and better looking than you should attract your husband away, what would you do?"

Kate: "Well, she might be more intelligent, but she wouldn't be better lookin' when I got through with her."

Art Young's cartoon of a limp-handed laborer slumped in a kitchen chair beside his wife standing at the stove. "By gorry, I'm tired," says the returned proletarian. "There you go," the wife replies. "Here I be a-standin' over a hot stove all day, an' you workin' in a nice cool sewer."

Floyd Dell, between sips of dago red, reading submitted poetry. A Chicago contribution about an ice-man. Almost nobody liked it; the mob turned thumbs down and jeered. Too low-brow, too much in the kitchen sink to appeal to an intelligentsia so recently delivered from the Inter-Collegiate Socialist Society, with its red-haired explosions by Upton Sinclair. The poem happened to be by one Carl Sandburg, an unpublished nobody. Two more of his free-will offerings are turned down with hauteur, though all three appear shortly afterward in *Pearson's*, paid for. A moving moment when "A Sentiment on Social Reform" from Eugene V. Debs was read:

While there is a lower class, I am in it.  
While there is a criminal element, I am of it.  
While there is a soul in jail, I am not free.

Max, the born editor, really gave scope to diverse talents; he even sat on the fence and clocked Walter Lippman, in his trials around the writing track.

## V

After a year of these colorful meetings the sombre days fell. Nothing succumbs like success. A dozen legal sharp-shooters trained their machine-minds on the non-conforming *Masses*. The Associated Press started a libel suit on the ground of Art Young's cartoon, "Poisoning the News at the Source." Threats and processes became so frequent that the magazine printed under its masthead:

N.B. We request that all suits at law be postponed until Fall, as our jail editor, Jack Reed, has gone to Europe.

Sub-editorial dissatisfaction simmered and at one meeting it boiled over. Max, harassed and heckled by the hungry coöperative artists still hinting for a nickel or two of the spoils, offered his resignation. The submerged conflict between the "essential Marxians" and those who had "very little conception of what it was all about" had erupted.

But Max's gallant offer was only a gesture, for once it was accepted, he turned right around and questioned the coöperative authority. The magazine, it seemed, still belonged to the seventeen original stockholders, the majority of whom hadn't been around for years. "The legal reorganization of the company," referred to as pending in the first Maxian number, had never been completed, and technically the paper didn't "belong to its editors" and wasn't "published by them as a coöperative enterprise" at all, at all.

The essential Maxians sent out for proxies from the stockholders and voted them by the steam-roller, just as floaters are handled by Tammany. When the count was in, Max's resignation was unanimously refused, and the magazine ceased even the pretence of coöperative existence.

The young artists, saddened, nay, revolted, by this procedure, withdrew in an indignant bunch and started *Spawn*, which lived but an issue or two, lacking Max's business instinct, driving force and suffrage subsidy-appeal. Oddly enough, *Spawn* split on coming forcibly into contact with the same steam-roller tactics within, in its own effort at coöperation.

The glint was gone out of that *Masses'* Golden Age, that impractical prime when its idealism led to the advertising of two original John Sloan etchings with a year's

subscription to the magazine, all for \$5, but without a single taker. The fact that even in these sad times such specimens of our native art bring from \$100 to \$200 apiece only emphasizes the gulf between two generations of taste, and points out the fact that the *Masses* was perhaps ahead of its time.

America's entry into the World War gassed it. Horatio Winslow went to Archangel as an A. E. F. captain, while the other editors went to jail. William English Walling flopped over to the side that bore his middle name. George Bellows turned out atrocity cartoons for George Creel, and some of the revolted youngsters slipped

into Mexico to find sanctuary at the Slack-er's Hotel founded by Glintenkamp in Mexico City.

Max's magazine metamorphosed into the *Liberator* and fiery Jack Reed resigned because it wasn't Communistic enough for him. When Sister Crystal took over the *Liberator* in 1921 it degenerated into an Eastman family organ.

Then the revolutionary spark of old Piet Vlag flared up again in the hands of Bob Minor, Mike Gold, Claude McKay, William Gropper, and Joe Freeman, who carry the original coal of Vlag's fire in the *New Masses* torch of today. But it took a generation to complete the flaming circle.

# MARCHING INTO THE MORNING

BY EDGAR LEE MASTERS

Clio, the far-glancing, the faithful maker  
Of the movie-tone of memory in which she captures  
The inner reality of the rise of cities,  
The woe and wailing of the wind that wastes them,  
The weariness and the serpent-stung defeat,  
Striking the feet from the mimicry of sand,  
Which disconcert the heroes of earth who shoulder  
The weight of Heaven and are crushed thereby—  
Clio is brief of words of their last day,  
And brief, too, of the tombs and where they stand.  
But to initiate the generations  
She sounds her uplifted trumpet, and hails the sun,  
Which rises as she sings, and shows the pageant  
Of souls that surged and struggled  
Seeking the dawns, who vanished in their splendors,  
Consumed as specks of blackness and turned to light,  
As they went on and marched into the morning.

## II

It is a trumpet of song that Clio blows;  
It is a script of Greek that Clio writes;  
It is a tragic scene to a tragic chorus,  
And an interwoven ode of thought and music,  
And a rendering of the story of man on Earth,  
Out of which rises a mountain against the sun,  
Up which these souls are climbing, forever passing,  
The unsubdued, the unafraid, the restless,  
The travelers, searchers, burners of the flame.  
Clio will never show the sad procession  
On the day of death, nor ever show the tomb,  
However carved and massive, of those who crushed  
The last, the brightest drop from the tragic grapes  
That grew their ichor out of the lava slopes.  
No, but she films them climbing up the hill,  
She shows them as they march into the morning.



## III

So neither San Domingo nor Seville,  
Nor the waters of the sullen Mississippi,  
Nor where San Cristobal, or San Andres rise,  
Nor where the eagle-haunted peaks look over  
The unmeaning vastness of the Great Divide,  
Nor where the man-souled seas confer  
With mountains on the races that come and go,  
And whisper in winds with misted faces of Earth-themes—  
It is not here that Clio stands divining  
The ultimate secrets of races and of lands.  
A continent discovered, or rivers explored  
Are accidents while searching for gold or spice.  
But restlessness, and hope, and rapt beliefs  
In consummations, these enthrall the genius  
Of Clio who seeks the crystal residuum  
Compacted and made precious by crushing rocks;  
She brightens her eyes with the last-shed drop of blood  
Of a race that climbed and stumbled while attaining.  
For did an army of the young fight on?  
Were they deceived, misled, but never faltered?  
Did they for money-changers climb up the slopes,  
Believing that they were beckoned by a god?  
Did the sun take them as they faced the morning?  
Did they as searchers never find the truth?  
Did they as fearless ones breathe deadly gases  
Suddenly from the fissures of the rocks?  
Or walk with feet burned off in sportive lava?  
Did they as toilers never have reward?  
Did they as thirsters never find the fountain,  
Nor get the treasure, nor reach the fabled city,  
Nor ever see the land of heart's desire?  
Even so they are the souls that Clio pictures  
Filmed to the symphonies of ocean surges.  
They are the souls which give Earth's story meaning  
With unfathomed tragedy, as the sky gives meaning.  
For like the sky they ask what none can answer;  
They spur to questions ever with transient glimpses  
Of Something which hides, and half reveals itself.

## IV

Clio seeks through the Earth for cliffs and gorges  
Where the way was missed,

Or where Fate blew a blindness in men's eyes,  
And where though blind men clambered while they fell,  
And where the rocks and thickets  
Were harder than were needed to spur their courage  
And had no use except to defeat the quest.

## V

Eternal memory is the meed that Clio  
Measures to these,  
Wherewith she points her summing epilogues,  
And fits the words for revealing choruses.  
The rarest blossom and most beautiful,  
Growing on high upon a cliff of granite  
Was that plucked by Demeter's lonely daughter  
At the moment that she passed to the underworld:  
It was the blossom men call tragedy.

# THE FALLACIES OF THE N. R. A.

BY HENRY HAZLITT

**Y**ou expect me to tell you anything about America?" said Montague Norman to a British audience in September. "It is two weeks at least since I have been there, and in those two weeks a new situation, almost a new country, has grown up. So continuous and so great are the changes that no one who is not on the spot is up-to-date."

It would be presumptuous and unwise for lesser beings not to follow the example of the governor of the Bank of England. In the few weeks between the time that these words are written and the time the reader's eyes are cast on them another new situation, new policy and New Deal may be upon us. The present article, therefore, is not to be taken as a prediction. It is not even to be taken as a description of what is happening. It is intended primarily as a scrutiny of the assumptions on which the current New Deal—in particular, the N. R. A.—is based, to see whether those assumptions are sound or plausible.

Perhaps the most important of them is that the arbitrary cutting down of hours will force the employment of more men. Obviously, however, it can have this effect only in firms and industries that were previously employing men for a larger number of hours, on the average, than the new codes prescribe as a maximum. Most of these codes call for a forty-hour week. But last June, for example, the month before the first code went into effect, the average number of hours of work a week for each

employed worker in industry, according to the figures of the National Industrial Conference Board, was only forty-one, and earlier in the year they had been below thirty. A Depression does more to reduce working hours even than a New Deal. The codes can provide employment for more men only in those industries that either were already working, or would otherwise now be working, more than forty hours a week. Among these is the cotton textile industry, where there has actually been an increase in employment from 356,000 persons in March to 466,000 in September.

If *other* conditions are such as to bring about a revival—and to some extent they have recently been so—then the N. R. A. programme tends to bring a more rapid reëmployment than otherwise. But it must be pointed out that in so far as it does so it is essentially a Share-the-Work movement. The total amount of wages paid out is not necessarily made any greater through a mere reduction in the weekly hours of individual workers. Instead of five men getting paid for forty-eight hours a week each, for example, six men may be employed at forty hours a week each—with each of the original five receiving five-sixths as much as he otherwise might have. In brief, each of the original five men is contributing one-sixth of his possible income for the sake of the extra man. The burden of "creating employment" in this manner merely falls on labor itself.

This is what tends to happen as long as there is a slack in employment to be taken up. In prosperous times, however, when labor might otherwise be fully employed, the cutting down of permissible hours from, say, forty-eight a week to forty, would mean that fewer goods were being produced than could be produced, and that everybody was poorer than he needed to be. It is true, of course, that the reduction in output would be somewhat less than the reduction in hours, for with fewer hours, and hence with less fatigue, it would be possible to speed up hourly production. Nevertheless, the fatigue of eight hours a day for six days is not in most occupations very intense; and no one can seriously argue that exactly as large a product could be produced in six six-hour or five eight-hour days.

It may be argued, of course, that there is still a gain in the less arduous toil and in the added leisure that fewer hours mean to labor. This is true; but the leisure is something that must be paid for. A worker who is paid 50 cents an hour would get \$24 for a forty-eight-hour week and only \$20 for a forty-hour week. With so low an income, \$4 may mean a great deal; the worker might conceivably prefer to buy something else with it than eight free hours. He might prefer to buy only two more free hours, or at most four more, and use the other \$2 or \$3 for more decent meals. For it may be pointed out (if it is still legal to use any of the terms of orthodox economics) that each new hour of leisure the worker gets has a declining marginal significance to him, while each dollar of pay he loses has an increasing marginal importance. Under the N. R. A., however, his new leisure is obligatory.

Another of the leading assumptions behind the N. R. A. is that industry really has the funds to pay out in wages, but

has wickedly refused to do so, and that all that is needed is a legal or political compulsion. This overlooks the most obvious facts of the whole Depression. A compilation of the returns of 1,800 of the leading industrial, public-utility, and railroad companies in 1932 showed that the majority, numbering 61% of the total, had deficits aggregating \$787,000,000, which offset the net profits, aggregating \$682,000,000 reported by the other 39%, leaving a deficit balance for all of them of \$105,000,000. The Class I railroads taken alone showed a combined net deficit of approximately \$153,000,000 for 1932. In the majority of companies, therefore, the funds did not exist out of which to pay higher wages; even the wages being paid were coming for the most part out of dwindling surpluses. If average wage rates had been forced up in 1932, before there had already been a rise in prices and some improvement in conditions from causes outside of the N. R. A., then the net result would have been to throw many more firms into bankruptcy, and to increase unemployment. In itself, the N. R. A. is an anti-Recovery policy.

## II

One of the chief assumptions on which the N. R. A. rests is, of course, that if wages can somehow be forced up to a higher level there will be an increase of purchasing power, and hence a recovery in trade and production. This assumption involves two major confusions: (1) it confuses a mere *shift* in purchasing power with an *increase* of it, and (2) it confuses *wage rates* with *wage payments*. Let us consider these more in detail.

An increase in wage rates should not be interpreted as representing necessarily a net increase in purchasing power, be-

cause in so far as it is taken at the expense of what was previously profits, the purchasing power of managers and investors falls off to the same extent as that of labor rises. The result in such a case is not the purchase of a greater total amount of goods but rather a shift in demand from some classes of goods to others—from a small volume of expensive commodities to a larger volume of inexpensive commodities. Such a shift might be highly desirable in itself during certain periods. From 1922 to 1929, for example, the aggregate command over goods exercised by manufacturing labor, as Frederick C. Mills has pointed out, increased at a rate of 3.1% a year while that of "ownership and management" increased by 7.3% a year. In this period of high profits too much of the social income was being turned back into reinvestment in new plant. But a shift from profits to wages can accomplish very little toward revival in a period like the present, when profits are at an extremely low point and new capital investment (except that represented by public works) is close to zero.

Let us turn now to the distinction between wage payments and wage rates. In the last few years the former have fallen to an enormously greater extent than the latter. Thousands of factories report their total payrolls to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics every month. These payrolls have shrunk during the Depression appallingly. At the low point of this year, in March, the amount paid out in wages was only 33% of that paid out in a similar period in 1926; by September this had risen to only 53% of the 1926 level. Hourly wage rates, on the other hand, have fallen on the average comparatively little during the Depression period. The National Industrial Conference Board has calculated that at the end of 1932 average

hourly earnings had fallen 21.2%, compared with a decline in living costs of 22% in the same period.

Leo Wolman believes that the conference board's figures do not cover a sufficiently wide field, and estimates that the decline in wage rates was somewhere between 20 and 30% in that period. Wage rates in certain industries, and for non-union labor, fell of course much more than this; but this fall was offset by much smaller declines, or the absence of any reduction at all, elsewhere. There was no reduction from the peak whatever, for example, in the hourly wages of anthracite miners. In other words, the laborer who remained employed, and for the same number of hours that he had been employed before the Depression, enjoyed on the average very nearly the same purchasing power, in terms of goods, during the Depression as before it. In fact, the "real" weekly earnings, not only of anthracite miners, but of railroad workers, public utility employes, and employes in retail trade, actually increased during the Depression.

The purchasing power that really needs to be restored, therefore, is not that represented by the hourly wage rates of the men already on full time, but that of the millions of men on part time and of the ten million still out of work. To say this, however, is to say that the problem of "restoring purchasing power" is merely incidental to the broader problem of inquiring into the causes of the Depression and in the light of that inquiry developing an intelligent general programme of recovery. This broader problem is too large to be considered parenthetically here.

But one thing we are bound to do is to look at the problem of recovery as the individual manufacturer or business firm sees it. Since the World War we have



witnessed the most violent collapse of wholesale commodity prices at least since the period just following the Napoleonic wars. That decline has amounted to about 40% in the last four years alone. Now, the problem of employers of labor, if they hope to remain in business, has been to get their unit costs of production down in something like the same ratio. The leaders of the N. R. A. have persistently ignored or forgotten the glaring truth that labor will not be employed unless there is a profit in employing it. The real problem is to return to a working relationship between prices and costs of production. The increase in wage rates involved by the N. R. A. tends not to solve this problem but to intensify it.

In brief, it attempts to deal with the problem of purchasing power from the wrong end. It assumes that if higher wage rates are paid out to labor, this added money will be spent for more goods and so lead to an increase in production and to higher prices. But we have already seen that even on the most favorable assumptions there may not be any net increase in purchasing power, because employers, managers, and investors will lose the purchasing power that labor gains. It is now necessary to admit also that the immediate increase in costs of production involved by the N. R. A. may do immediate damage by obliging employers to lay off more men and so actually reducing purchasing power.

### III

The immemorial assumption behind all popular legislation is that a law or a political programme is to be judged by its intent rather than by its probable results. No matter how often this assumption is exploded—as it finally was so violently by

the effects of the Eighteenth Amendment—it returns to the mass mind with undiminished force. This accounts for the popularity of the minimum wage provisions of the N. R. A. It is naïvely assumed that all the workers who have previously been getting less than the minimum will have their pay raised by the designated amount and will continue to be employed. The plain truth is, of course, that if no one is to be employed in industry at less than \$11 to \$15 a week, then no one who is not deemed worth that amount will be employed in industry at all.

Obviously, we cannot make a man worth \$14 a week by saying that he shall not be offered and shall not take any less. We may be taking away from him even such miserable earnings as he could make, and we may be taking away from the community whatever product his labor could produce. What do we offer him in return for terminating his earnings and his labor? The brains in charge of the N. R. A. do not appear to have thought that far. Must we offer a man a choice between being worth \$14 a week and starving? If we throw him out of work don't we owe him a permanent dole in return? And must not this dole be at least greater than the amount he previously earned—since we have already pronounced this to be below the level of decency? Must not the dole, in fact, logically be at or just below the minimum set? And if it is, what about the terrific temptation we create for malingering?

Even if we overlook this temptation, we should at least attempt some estimate of the probable number of persons the minimum wages are going to throw out of work, and of the enormous drain on the Treasury the payment of doles to them would cause. Up to the moment of writing this I have seen no evidence that any one

in Washington has made such an estimate. Yet *average* actual weekly earnings in all manufacturing industries in June, according to the figures of the National Industrial Conference Board, were \$18.49; in March they were only \$14.56. These low average weekly earnings are to some extent, of course, the result of part-time work; but they are enough to show that the code minimums, when compared with actual prevailing wages, are quite high.

The probable answer of some supporters of the N. R. A. to all this may be that wages are not primarily determined by productivity but by bargaining power, and that the new compulsion on employers to pay a minimum wage will offset the worker's disadvantage and take the place of this bargaining power. All one can say to this is that, while there is an element of truth in it, differences in bargaining power can on the average affect wages only within certain relatively narrow limits. Thus, in spite of the fact that Great Britain for years has been much more highly unionized than the United States, the wages even of non-union labor in America have been much higher than the wages for corresponding union labor in Great Britain.

It is true, of course, that in numerous cases the new minimum wage requirements actually will result in the raising of wages of persons formerly employed at a lower wage, and that the difference will be absorbed out of profits; but that is no reason why we can complacently ignore the thousands of cases in which this obviously will not occur. And it is fair to ask those defenders of the N. R. A. who do not believe in the possibility of any of the consequences I have indicated, just why they are so niggardly and stony-hearted. If minimum wages can be imposed with good consequences for all and ill conse-

quences for none, why stop at \$11 to \$15? Why not a minimum wage of \$25 a week? or \$50? or \$100? Obviously, the higher a minimum wage is placed the greater its unworkability and dangers become. This is not to say that there may not be a point at which the potential gains of a carefully considered minimum wage might outweigh its dangers. But I have so far seen no argument anywhere which attempted to show that the new minimums fixed were not above that point. So far as the members of the Brain Trust are concerned, no realistic discussion of the consequences has ever passed the lips of any one of them.

One contention we have heard is that the new minimums will practically abolish child labor in industry. This is true, and it is a very great gain. But there has been no attempt to consider secondary consequences even here. It is apparently assumed that all the children laid off will be hereafter well taken care of by their parents and sent to a finishing-school; at all events, no painful sense of responsibility seems to be felt towards them. It is also generally assumed that their places will be taken by an equal number of adults. This is plainly improbable. Where children have been paid, say, \$5 a week, the men or women who take their places will be paid \$11 to \$15 a week. If unit costs of production are not raised it will only be because the adult workers on the average will turn out about three times as many goods each as the children did. But if they do so, then only one-third as many adults will be needed as there were children.

In other cases the new minimums will lead to the discharge of women to put on men, or the laying off of older men, of the feeble and the maimed, to make way for the young and the able-bodied. The substi-

tute workers will be smaller in number to precisely the extent that they are more efficient. In some industries it may not be possible, owing to the conditions within them or the nature of the work, to increase substantially the production of individual workers by getting other labor. In these industries it is probable that there will simply be an increase in the pay of the workers already employed. But this would mean a corresponding increase in costs of production, and in the long run a corresponding increase in the ultimate price of the product.

This might be brought about by forcing the marginal producers out of business, and so creating more unemployment. Or the higher price might lead to a reduction in the volume of the product sold, which would also cause more unemployment. It may be replied that cheap goods which are the product of sweated labor are not worth having, and that would be hard to deny. But it must not be forgotten, either, that when the price of such goods is raised, part of the people who have to pay the increased price are the workers whose pay has been raised; and to that extent their increased pay is illusory.

#### IV

One of the great advantages of the N. R. A. programme, it is claimed, is that it has enormously accelerated collective bargaining and increased unionization. Now, theoretically, an increase in labor's bargaining power—particularly in the trades that have hitherto not been unionized—is in the highest degree desirable. Yet it must be recognized that in practice the unions have seldom exercised this power intelligently. A skilled general knows both when to advance and when to retreat, and by just about how much.

American labor leadership has so far shown few signs of possessing this knowledge.

It could and should have got a good deal more for its members in the 1923-1929 period; and the stronger unions should have accepted more substantial reductions than they did, and accepted them more promptly, once the Depression had got under way. When I say this I mean that they should have done so merely in the interests of a majority of their own membership, for the sake of securing as full a volume of continuous employment as possible. But in general it is the policy of unions to "let well enough alone" in periods of prosperity, when they should be making much more rapid gains, and to try to sit tight during depressions, ignoring—even after the greatest price collapse of a century—the clear need for re-adjustment in costs if industrial activity and a high volume of employment are to be maintained.

The policy of the British trade unions is illuminating in this respect. When the pound returned to its old gold parity in 1925, after having been down to a discount of 34%, and after prices and wages had to some extent adjusted themselves to that discount, prices fell again in reflection of the higher value of the pound; but the British labor unions refused to accept a reduction in wages. Such a reduction would have been necessary only in monetary terms and not in terms of goods; it need have gone only as far—at most—as the decline in prices and living costs. But highly unionized British labor refused to budge. Its resistance was made possible not merely by its unionization but by the dole to the unemployed.

The result was relative stagnation in British business, and a heavy and continuing volume of unemployment, all through

the period in which the United States was at the height of its New Era. When the more complete unionization of American labor which is now going forward so rapidly has been achieved, we may expect a similar rigidity in wage rates in the United States, and the same difficulty in making adjustments to changed conditions. This difficulty will result in prolonging and intensifying future depressions.

## V

In view of all these potentialities in the new programme, not to speak of many of the effects which are already apparent, it may be wondered why so many business men are so warmly supporting it. Some of them, no doubt, are sincerely patriotic, and sincerely happy to think that the lowest class of labor will be getting more pay; but a more substantial cause of the general rejoicing may be found in that part of the codes governing "fair competition." It is obvious that under the guise of eliminating "unfair practices" and "stabilizing the industry", most of these codes involve a movement in the direction of the cartellization of American business—in other words, in the direction of monopoly.

Most of these agreements to "stabilize" prices involve in effect a raising of prices. It is low prices that are always frowned upon in them, not high prices; prices below a "fair" level, not prices above it. In some codes this may seem merely amusing, as when the corset and brassière industry, while permitting manufacturers or wholesalers to contribute up to 50% of the net cost of a retailer's advertising space, prohibits them from paying *any* of the cost of advertising on "corsets, combinations, girdle-corsets, or step-in-corsets which are advertised for retail sale at less than \$2, or

on brassières which are advertised for retail sale at less than \$1."

The case becomes much more serious, however, when it involves price fixing in a basic industry, for example, that of lumber. Under the code in this industry an agency is set up known as the Lumber Code Authority, Inc., to administer the agreement and to undertake the task of controlling (*i.e.*, restricting) production, and the task of "cost protection." The latter, of course, simply means the fixing of prices. The Authority, it is to be observed, is not permitted to fix maximum but only *minimum* prices. It must not allow such prices to fall below "the cost of production." Now, anyone who has even a nodding acquaintance with business or manufacturing knows that cost of production is a very elusive thing to determine. It is never the same in two firms in the same business; and even in the same firm no two accountants will agree regarding the actual unit costs of production in that firm. But the lumber code takes no chances. The cost of production below which lumber prices will not be permitted to fall is the "current weighted average cost of production", and in adding up this cost the following items are to be included:

- (1) wages; (2) materials and supplies;
- (3) overhead and administration, including trade association dues and code fees;
- (4) shipping, including grading and loading;
- (5) selling . . . ; (6) maintenance;
- (7) insurance, including compensation and employé insurance . . . ; (8) taxes, including taxes on timber . . . ; (9) interest paid on indebtedness [representing not only plant actually operating but "capable of operating"];
- (10) discounts, claims paid and losses on trade accounts; (11) depreciation . . . ; (12) raw material [including "standing timber carried in capital account"] and (13) conservation and reforestation, including costs of protection of timbered and cut-over lands. . . .

When all of these items are thrown in, the lumber industry should be able to present a very impressive figure for cost of production. In other words, it can fix a very substantial minimum price. And as this minimum price is to represent the *average* cost of production in the industry, very liberally calculated, it is obvious that it will also provide a substantial profit for at least half the units in the industry. The prospective home-owner whose house is going to cost him considerably more than heretofore will be glad to notice that foreign buyers will not have to pay these high prices for American lumber: export sales are explicitly excluded from the minimum-price provisions. In other words, where American lumber interests have to meet foreign competition, they will consent to the indignity and the hardship and horrible injustice of selling below cost of production. Anyway, they can take it out of the American consumer. Like all the other codes, the lumber code contains a pious provision to the effect that "this code shall not be construed, interpreted or applied so as to promote or permit monopolies or monopolistic practices."

It is obvious that under the present N. R. A. programme the American consumer is to become the victim of a series of trades and industries which, in the name of "fair competition", will be in effect monopolies, consisting of units that agree not to make too serious an effort to undersell each other; restricting production, fixing prices,—doing everything, in fact, that monopolies are formed to do. The American consumer will be paying higher prices not only because of higher wage rates but because of these innumerable trade agreements. The increasing rigidity which greater unionization will impose on wages will be supplemented by perhaps an even greater rigidity which

these agreements will fasten on wholesale and retail prices. Instead of a relatively flexible system with some power of adjustment to fluid world economic conditions we shall have an inadjustable structure constantly attempting—at the cost of stagnant business and unemployment—to resist these conditions.

## VI

I must again make it plain that in this article I am not attempting to predict anything. I am merely trying to examine what the effects of the N. R. A. programme would be if it were the sole important force acting on conditions, and if its provisions were not evaded but strictly complied with. But obviously the actual economic future will be determined by numerous major factors. A heavy dose of currency inflation alone, for example, would offset the higher wage scales by raising prices to a point where those wage scales became irrelevant.

Conditions in the United States will be influenced heavily by conditions in other countries; since July, 1932, there has actually been—in spite of our bank crisis in March—a rather steady improvement in world conditions; and the forces that have brought this about may continue to operate. The results of the new programme at the moment of writing are thus ambiguous. Secretary Frances Perkins has estimated that at the beginning of October nearly 2,750,000 more persons were employed than in March. Part of this new employment occurred, of course, before the N. R. A. went into effect; and it is impossible to know just how much of it represents mere "work-sharing."

On the other hand, while the New York *Times* weekly business index, compiled from statistics of freight car loadings,



steel-mill activity, electric-power, automobile, and lumber production, and cotton forwardings, rose from 60% of a hypothetical normal in March to nearly 100% in mid-July, it is perhaps significant that it was just at this time, when the first code went into effect, that the index began plunging downward again, by mid-October cancelling more than half of the early gain. But what has happened since July cannot be attributed to the N. R. A. alone; the economic future will be determined by a complex of forces of which even that programme will be only one.

Against the good elements in that programme—the virtual eradication of child labor in industry, the help to some underpaid labor, the possible elimination of competitive waste in some special industries where such action is desperately needed, as in the oil fields—the offsets are heavy ones. It cannot by itself give new employment to anything like the extent that its supporters imagine. To the extent that it does so it is a Share-the-work movement, with the chief burden on labor itself. In times like the present, it will result in the substitution of more efficient workers for

less efficient ones, but in times that might otherwise be prosperous it would reduce the possible production of goods and the possible demand for goods.

It makes leisure compulsory at too high a cost. It has never really investigated the ability of industry to pay the new wages. It confuses a shift in purchasing power with a net increase of it, wage rates with wage payments. It offers a man a choice between being worth \$11 to \$15 a week or starving. It accepts no responsibility for those it throws out of work, nor is it even interested in learning how many persons that may be. It encourages a unionization that will probably make adjustment to changing conditions more difficult, and it creates a series of cartels under the ægis of government that will soon have the consumer completely at their mercy.

The anonymous consumer was usually the person that William Graham Sumner was referring to when he mentioned the Forgotten Man. That the President who revived this phrase should be the one responsible for the N. R. A. is an ironic consummation at which old Sumner's ghost must be smiling wanly.

# ATHEISM SUCCUMBS TO DOUBT

BY GEORGE SEIBEL

THERE is practically no organized free-thought, in the theological sense, in the United States today, and there never has been.

There are various reasons for this. One is that Socialists used to infest freethought meetings, and a lecturer on "The Self-Contradictions of the Bible" would presently find himself sunk in a debate on Economic Determinism. Another is that Americans have an apparently ineradicable urge to believe in some sort of Santa Claus, to feel some kind of cosmic emotion, to poke their noses into a cabinet of mysteries. Even agnostics often turn spiritualist, the excuse being that they have got "proofs." Some freethinkers in Missouri once started a town called Liberal, still on the map, but the founder himself was converted by a fake medium and ended by writing pious poetry in muddled meters.

Beside this corrupting itch for revelations, the unorganized apathy of the forces of unbelief is due mainly to the difficulty of capitalizing a negation. Why bother about God if He doesn't exist? Why throw bricks at a shadow? There is also the desire for domestic peace and the fear of business boycott. This was humorously dramatized in one large city at the advent of Billy Sunday, the howling dervish of Fundamentalism. Some whose tender intelligence was insulted wanted to hit back, and a movement was started to organize a Rationalist Society. Accordingly, a membership roll was placed in a radical book-

shop, and in two weeks about 200 had enrolled. One man paid \$5 for dues—and then put down, not his own name, but that of the well-known John Smith, saying:

That's not my real name, of course. I'm simply a damned old hypocrite. I'm an elder in the church and pass the collection-plate every Sunday. If my wife knew I joined this Rationalist Society I'd lose my happy home, and if my neighbors knew it my insurance business would go to hell. I'm paying this five dollars as a fine for being a damned old hypocrite.

He had to listen every Sunday to a Boanerges of the Brimstone Trust. If there were more such preachers in the big cities there might be more freethought societies. Rationalism is largely a reaction against noisy homiletics and nosy bigotry. Robert G. Ingersoll might never have become a militant infidel if his father hadn't been a Presbyterian preacher, and his ardent oratory would hardly have found so many open ears if the vociferous nonsense of T. DeWitt Talmage had not made people eager for an antidote. In the same way Moody and Sankey may have been responsible for "The Mistakes of Moses."

American skepticism sprouted from Ethan Allen and Thomas Paine to flower in Ingersoll. Paine's "Age of Reason," published in 1794, is still a best-seller. Even the clergy slyly read it, and one preacher has told how, during his term in a theological seminary, he walked seven miles into the country, the book in his coat-tail pocket,

to devour it under a shady tree. Ingersoll was so persuasive that he converted even preachers. One young man in a white choker called on him in his hotel, and asked how he could earn an honest living. Ingersoll summoned the manager of a large traction system, also an agnostic, to save a soul. A few days later that young pastor was an accountant in the office of the railways company.

The best infidel lecturers used to come from the pulpits. Samuel P. Putnam, long president of the American Secular Union, and M. M. Mangasarian, emeritus lecturer of the Chicago Rationalist Society, were orthodox preachers before they became professional blasphemers. But nowadays the tables are turned, and infidels often drift into the pulpits, salving their conscience with the plea, "We can do better work for liberalism and tolerance *in* the church than outside." The village atheist who used to corner the parson by asking where Cain got his wife is becoming extinct. His successor owns the *Encyclopedia Biblica* and can prove that the famous passage in Josephus referring to Christ is a forgery. Likely as not the old-time atheist, where he survives, is now teaching a Bible class.

Yet America has had an unbroken tradition of militant freethought since Paine, Franklin and Jefferson preached Deism, the fashionable form of unbelief before Laplace started the nebula and Haeckel invented protoplasm. That old Deism still survives as an attenuated Unitarianism in Ethical Culture Societies, while the 4 A's, the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, attacks God with all the fury a rural evangelist expends on Satan and Rum. But in vain.

Charles B. Smith, head of this A.A.A.A., looks like a bishop and yearns to be a martyr. Every now and then he rushes to some benighted State like Arkansas or

Tennessee, and the meek Christians thrust him into jail or threaten him with tar and feathers. But Smith and Joseph Lewis and all the other lost souls, including Queen Silver, the girl atheist, who regularly challenges Uldine Utley, the girl evangelist, to debate the existence of Yahweh, hardly constitute a serious menace to Him nor a powerful reinforcement of the Devil.

The current lack of interest has come to such a point that the vast majority of unbelievers will not even attend meetings. When Marshall J. Gauvin, the best rationalist lecturer of the present day, now head of a society in Winnipeg, appeared at Indianapolis and Pittsburgh, scores of professed freethinkers declined to support his movement.

"I don't want to hear him kill God every Sunday," said one. "The funeral was over long ago."

## II

It takes an active persecution, reaching his private comfort—say the Blue Laws or Prohibition—to rouse the average American's ire against the churches. Why fight over Nebuchadnezzar, the Galatians, or Archbishop Paley? They're all dead. Owing to this lack of interest and support, the *Truth-Seeker*, official organ of American agnosticism, founded by D. M. Bennett in 1873 and now conducted by George E. MacDonald, has shrunk from a fat weekly to a slim monthly. There were ten freethought journals in the United States in 1888; today there seems to be only one. And the three surviving freethought organizations, the American Secular Union, the American Rationalist Association, and the Association for the Advancement of Atheism, are struggling along with insignificant membership and beggarly funds.

What American freethought really needs

is a good persecution, with some Presbyterian Nero obliging enough to make torches of any who sneer at Jonah's whale or Elisha's floating ax. The clergy, unfortunately, are wary and indolent. Apostle Smith of the 4 A's can't even find one to debate with him, much less to gather fagots for an *auto da fe*. The Right Rev. William Montgomery Brown, of Galion, Ohio, the Devil's Bishop, had to labor a long while to induce the Protestant Episcopal Church to unfrock him.

It was not always thus. The God-killers of half a century ago were taken seriously and took themselves seriously. D. M. Bennett wrote "An Open Letter to Jesus Christ," asking hundreds of irreverent questions:

Do you remember the critical period of cutting teeth?

At what age did you have the mumps, the measles, and the whooping-cough? Did you have them light or severe?

Did you wear petticoats when you were little, and do you remember your first pair of pants?

How came you to quit the carpenter's business? Was it not a good trade at that time?

Have you ever doubted whether your first miracle, changing water into wine, at the wedding in Cana, was well advised, especially as the guests were already drunk?

There are twenty-seven pages of such questions in the old pamphlet: no wonder St. Anthony Comstock railroaded Bennett to jail for a year. Bennett was a fighter. Having been a doctor, a printer, a druggist, a nursery salesman and a brick manufacturer, he became an editor and publisher, eking a meagre income out of the *Truth-Seeker*. When he died in 1882 a monument was placed above his grave "by 1000 friends." He waxed famous on persecution.

The *Truth-Seeker* attracted a little army of militant scribes who wrote reams of red-

hot articles proving that the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve Apostles were Signs of the Zodiac, that Jesus never lived at all, and that Jonah was a nature-faker. They were as belligerent as John Peck, "the learned blacksmith," who said of himself that, "like the Irishman, I never was at peace unless I was in a fight." Peck could write about Irenæus or Tertullian, Krishna or Zoroaster, with the intimate familiarity which present-day divinity students exhibit with Greta Garbo or Rudy Vallee. But the learned blacksmith was not above sprightly badinage. He anticipated the blithe style of "The Green Pastures" in telling what happened in Egypt:

Moses and Aaron turned the waters into blood. Pharaoh laughed, Ha, ha, ha! and said, "Your hocus-pocus tricks ain't worth a picayune over here in Egypt." So he brought forth his magicians, and they turned all the waters into blood, and got a great deal better blood, and more of it, from the same water, although Moses and Aaron had worked it over once. Then they brought forth the frogs, and the magicians did the same, and got bigger frogs and better jumpers.

At the other extreme was Felix L. Oswald, a Belgian physician who had come to Mexico with Maximilian's army and later drifted north, writing articles for the old *Popular Science Monthly* and the Cincinnati *Enquirer*. Oswald collected a caravan of apes as he traveled from town to town, and he also carried a cyclopedic cargo of erudition, which he ladled out in the most ornately pompous style since Gibbon and Johnson. He wrote "The Bible of Nature," a revelation based on reason and science. He wrote "The Secret of the East" to prove that Jesus "was a Buddhistic emissary, and preached his gospel in the name of Buddha Sakyamuni." Most freethought propagandists profess esteem for Jesus the

man, but Oswald frothed at the mouth every time he spoke of the Galilean Anti-Naturalist. He even blamed Christianity for the denudation of forests, our carnivorous diet, and vaccination.

In those days hundreds of atheistic pamphlets were published and sold in the United States. They bore such titles as "Why Don't God Kill the Devil?" "The Myth of the Great Deluge," "Where Is Hell?" "Death-Beds of Infidels," "Faith or Fact," "The Devil's Catechism," and "When Did Jehoshaphat Die?" John E. Remsburg, author of the last-named, proved by the Bible and arithmetic that this King of Israel died on sixteen different dates. Today nobody knows or cares that Jehoshaphat ever lived.

One of the most popular books was "Crimes of Preachers," an annual dedicated to the proposition that the pulpit contributes a greater proportion of inmates to penitentiaries than any other business or profession.

But the most widely circulated pamphlet was "144 Self-Contradictions of the Bible," compiled by W. H. Burr, a stenographer who served as an official reporter in Congress, devoting his leisure to proving that Paine was also Junius and in spare moments dashed off the Declaration of Independence for Thomas Jefferson. Burr demonstrated the credulity of the confessedly enlightened by believing in the Baconian theory and in table rappings. Bennett and many others fell for Madame Blavatsky and the Fox Sisters. Kersey Graves, who wrote a book on "The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors," devoted one chapter to proving that "Christ was what is now known as a spiritual medium." B. F. Underwood, a popular lecturer on materialism, got "proofs" and started hunting spooks after having launched the *Open Court*, which long had

the distinction of being the most learned of magazines and of having the smallest circulation.

Then, as now, the enemies of Yahweh fell easy prey to many curious secondary isms. They were Abolitionists and early advocates of women's rights; they preached vegetarianism and spelling reform. Today some are Communists, and one publishes a journal advocating the attainment of virtue by Nudism and deploring the immoral tendency of overcoats.

Though they were odd characters, many of them, it does not follow that these "learned blacksmiths" and "atheist watch-makers" were deficient in a sort of scholarship. Otto Wettstein, designer of the Free-thought badge, could refute Paley's design argument as neatly as Ludwig Buechner, whose "Force and Matter" was once a text-book of scientific materialism. Today Marshall J. Gauvin, a carpenter like Jesus, knows his Bible better than any bishop, can turn to any passage without a concordance, and could argue on the Ur-Marcus with Schmiedel, and distinguish the Elohist from the Jehovist text as definitely as Paul Haupt. Mangasarian, now basking in the California sunshine, can write as gracefully as Dean Inge, but doesn't tread as softly.

### III

The brethren have no following simply because no one outside Tennessee and Arkansas seems to be interested any more in such things. The Christian church today is a social club built on a foundation of tax-exempt real estate. God is a benevolent cosmic urge not incompatible with Einstein, Millikan and Jeans.

In the backwoods, of course, the old-fashioned theology still rages, but few care to track it to its lair. One extraordinarily enterprising freethinker showed me a copy



of John Brown's "Short Catechism for Young Children." Here are some of the questions and answers levelled at little tots in rustic Sabbath-schools every Sunday:

- Q. Of what were you made?  
 A. Of dust.  
 Q. What kind of place is Hell?  
 A. A place of endless torment; being a lake that burns with fire and brimstone.  
 Q. What are you by nature?  
 A. I am an enemy to God, a child of Satan, and an heir of Hell.  
 Q. What will the wicked for ever do in Hell?  
 A. They will roar, curse, and blaspheme God.

There was a time when this sort of theology, sulphurous enough for Dante, made Robert G. Ingersoll the Chrysostom of Agnosticism. To read the printed lectures of Ingersoll now—they are still read, though he died in 1899—offers but a faint echo and glimpse of the man, whose voice was music and his smile sunshine. His oratory lingers in memory like the Hamlet of Edwin Booth. When he denounced the doctrine of Hell, his listeners were ready to form a bucket-brigade and put out the flames. He has had a large if unsuspected influence in the air-conditioning of Christianity in the United States.

Among his many satellites and apostles, Samuel P. Putnam, once a Methodist preacher, was a soft-spoken and mellifluous gentleman with a grudge against the orthodox God because, unlike the hero of melodrama, He was never on hand when and where needed. Putnam used to recite his own poem:

You say there is a God  
 Above the boundless sky,  
 A wise and wondrous Deity  
 Whose strength none can defy.  
 You say that He is seated  
 Upon a throne most grand,  
 Millions of angels at His beck—  
 Why don't He lend a hand?

The poem goes on to specify various ways in which Yahweh might help humanity, and arrives at the sad conclusion:

Alas! I fear He's sleeping,  
 Or is Himself a dream,  
 A bubble on thought's ocean,  
 Our fancy's fading gleam.

The old-fashioned Hell was the unfailing inspiration of the old-fashioned freethought orators. But Hell isn't what it used to be, so the present-day infidels can't warm up. Freethought really needs a Billy Sunday to kindle a new Hell for it. Billy was once caught delivering Ingersoll's Memorial Day address as his own in a town near Pittsburgh—which gave Sinclair Lewis the hint for one of Elmer Gantry's most amusing tricks. Unwittingly, he has served the cause of freethought by his clowning. Some years ago he invaded a modern Babylon, and one evening preached a special sermon to unbelievers. The chairman of the ministerial committee next day expressed the hope that no unbelievers had heard it.

There were 225 freethought societies affiliated with the Liberal League and Secular Union in 1881; today there are not a dozen. They had a fine platform in the Nine Demands, calling for the taxation of church property, the abolition of chaplains in Army and Navy, and the end of Sabbath tyranny, the Bible oath, and other survivals of theocratic days. Unluckily, these societies would not cohere and did not grow. The German radicals who came as exiles after the revolution of 1849 started many *Freie Gemeinden*, but those that survive are slowly disintegrating. Rationalism makes no appeal to either the emotions or the stomach. Hence there have been many freethought leaders, but few followers.

They could never even agree on what to call themselves. Freethinker, Rationalist, Agnostic, Atheist, Liberal, Secularist, Monist, Materialist—take your choice! Comes

one who insists that he's a Hylo-Idealist and won't play along. Another announces that he's a Utilitarian, even if he's the only one.

"Study Sociology!" was the war-cry of Dr. James L. York, a converted Methodist from the Far West. He pronounced it so-sigh-ology. Dr. York had held fast to his Wesleyan unction and fervor, and often, in the midst of a godless harangue, would burst into a lusty gospel hymn to show how he used to carry on when he was "washed in the blood" and wanted the saved to

Throw out the life-line!  
Throw out the life-line!  
Some one is sinking today!

The study of sociology was the undoing of Voltairine de Cleyre, one of the women orators of the movement, second only to the fiery Juliet Severance. Voltairine looked almost mannish in her boiled shirt and sober black cloth, but she was a fanatical feminist. Legend said that her father had her educated in a convent, but was so great an admirer of Voltaire that he named her after the great mocker. Voltairine became a freethought lecturer. Then she was converted to anarchism by a disciple of Kropotkin, who himself later became a policeman in Baltimore. Voltairine landed in Philadelphia, where she taught immigrant children until she was shot by an admirer whose attentions she had repulsed. Though she looked like a deaconess she wrote poems of passion like Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Another picturesque personality was C. B. Reynolds, an ex-preacher of the Seventh Day Adventists, who raised \$300 to purchase a freethought evangelistic tent. In darkest New Jersey, in the godly town of Boonton, a pious mob wrecked it. At Morristown Reynolds was arrested for blasphemy because he spoke disrespectfully of

Jonah's whale. Ingersoll defended him, delivering an address that made Morristown famous. But Reynolds was found guilty, and fined \$25, which Ingersoll paid.

#### IV

These itinerant lecturers were always eager to trap clergymen into debate, but the saints were coy. If one was found to be willing he generally turned out to be an ecclesiastical adventurer whose financial fences needed repairs, or some self-anointed lunatic who had read Daniel and Revelation not wisely but too well. D. M. Bennett once announced a debate in the *Truth-Seeker* between himself and one Cyrus Romulus R. Teed. It soon appeared that the Rev. Mr. Teed considered himself a reincarnation of King Cyrus, and had founded a new religion call Koreshanity, based on the doctrine that this earth is a hollow globe and we are living on the inside. As in the House of David, lady angels were all around.

With the old Hell of the Bible freezing over, while all the churches installed kitchens and Pullman-car upholstery, the freethought lecturer had a hard time to make ends meet. One of them named Seymour once lectured for a Secular Society on the "Self-Contradictions of the Bible," "Myths of Easter Dawn," and "The Absurdity of Prayer." After he left town his friends heard that he was in Canada, running a society to convert infidels. A pamphlet said to be by him was called "The Fallacy of Atheism" and bore the text: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The Secular host was mystified and thrown into confusion by this apostasy, but it was explained a few years later when Professor Seymour, now a phrenologist, drifted into a meeting to celebrate Paine's birthday, January 29. He said:

I'm glad to see my old friends, and clear up some misunderstandings in your minds. I'm with you tonight because I've *always* been with you. But don't you remember, when I lectured for you here, how my fees were small and my clothes shabby? Well, I decided to go over to the Lord's side. *Look at me now!* I'm well-fed and prosperous. That's what the Lord has done for me. Do you blame me for not wanting to starve? But I don't want you to think I've gone crazy, and that's why I'm here tonight to tell you the truth.

Most of the lecturers were men of truculent sincerity, and some had great forensic power. Strongest of all was Charles Watts, whose son later founded the eminently respectable and now richly endowed Rationalist Press Association of London. Watts started a weekly, *Secular Thought*, in Toronto, and lectured throughout the United States in the 90's. In debate he used a sledgehammer. One old watchmaker, a lay reader in the Episcopal denomination, who had gone to school with him in England, used to present himself regularly as a victim for the sacrifice, with the following pathetic preface:

I know that when my argument is finished, Charles Watts will expose my pitiful ignorance and tear my logic to shreds. But someone must bear witness, for we are commanded to be "fools for Christ's sake." So I rise to answer my old friend's argument.

The champion said his little piece and sat down; then Watts would rend him into tatters as he had prophesied. Watts had an electric brain and an encyclopedic mind that would have made his fame and fortune in the law or any popular cause. He was probably the most potent debater who ever visited America. Both Charles Bradlaugh and Ludwig Buechner also came over to lecture, while in recent years Joseph McCabe has made several tours, but found he could not compete with the swamis and mahatmas. He has written a ton of Little

Blue Books for Haldeman-Julius. He is a Louvain scholar who spent fourteen years in a monastery, lives today in a garden suburb of London, and puts in most of his time at the British Museum digging up ammunition with the patience of a scholar to expend it with the fury of a zealot. Last year he told me he had written about 100 books, besides pamphlets as the sands of the sea. But McCabe belongs to England rather than America.

American freethought has no great platform champion today. Joseph Lewis would like to slay dragons, but they won't come out of their holes. Clarence Darrow, the gloomy dean of atheism, is too lazy to keep up with the Higher Criticism. Harry Elmer Barnes can't mix molasses with his vitriol as Colonel Bob used to. And the public is not inclined to pay for being deprived of the consolations of Hell unless it can laugh.

John E. Remsburg, a former schoolmaster whose book, "The Christ," represented many years of study, never made more than a competence by his arduous lecturing and writing. H. L. Green nearly starved to death in Buffalo trying to establish his *Freethinkers' Magazine*. Abner Kneeland, Josiah P. and Ernest Mendum and Horace Seaver published the *Investigator* at Boston for three generations, from 1830 to 1906, but they are dead now and so is their paper.

The innumerable Rationalist journals that have flickered briefly from time to time bore illuminative names: the *Mirror of Progress*, the *Positive Thinker*, the *Age of Reason*, the *Regenerator*, the *Radical Review*, the *Iconoclast*, the *Ironclad Age*, and the *Independent Pulpit*, not to mention innumerable *Beacons* and *Truths*. Outside of the *Truth-Seeker*, the *Investigator* and *Secular Thought* none had much excuse for existence.

Rich Americans have but rarely come forward as freethought angels. Having no souls to save, why pay? But there have been exceptions. Paine Hall in Boston was built with \$60,000 supplied by James Lick, father of the famous telescope, but few people now know where it is situated. Stephen Girard, the merchant prince whose \$6,000,000 college for orphans was endowed with the provision that no preacher should ever be permitted on the premises, and Edward Tuck, to whom Dartmouth College and the city of Paris are indebted for enormous benefactions, never made a profession of their freethought. Andrew Carnegie once sent a \$100 check for a celebration of Paine's birthday, and also said that Ingersoll was "always right on every issue," but he seldom opened his mouth about religion. Instead he gave organs to churches because, though he "might not agree with the preacher," he "couldn't object to the voice of the organ." Thomas A. Edison, Luther Burbank, and other heretics who achieved fame and fortune were too busy to join the march of the God-Killers against Yahweh.

Mark Twain, who was on the *Truth-Seeker* subscription list to the end of his days, was held in leash by his family, who kept his two most heretical books, "The Mysterious Stranger" and "What Is Man?" from publication for years. Rupert Hughes wrote a magazine article telling in bitter mood "Why I Do Not Go to Church," but

no one seemed to care. Upton Sinclair produced a devastating book on "The Profits of Religion," but Aimée Semple McPherson, on the showing of the news, must have a better reach.

To measure the progress of freethought in the United States since John W. Draper wrote his "History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science," a continuous best-seller like Paine's "Age of Reason," one must visit the churches and read the denominational papers. Not one believer in a thousand appears to know the difference between the Nicene and the Athanasian creeds. To the overwhelming majority Christianity is simply a ritual associated with sacred concerts on Sunday and chicken dinners at irregular intervals, the whole sustaining a variety of more or less useful funds and institutions. The Resurrection is officially affirmed every Easter Day. It isn't polite to mention Hell. Original Sin somehow got mixed up with violation of the now defunct Volstead Act, and will have to be defined anew.

The faithful of romantic inclination dabble in theosophy or Bahaism. Are they excommunicated? Nay, even the village atheist would be welcomed into the fold if he'd be willing to subscribe to the Y.M.C.A. and hold his tongue. So the God-Killers marching forth to battle nowadays find the enemy's camp deserted, Daniel's lions dead of old age, and the Shekinah departed unto the Ozarks.

# IN PRAISE OF THE SUN

BY LOU WYLIE

THESE poets are all crazy, gawking  
With empty bellies at a sunset,  
Clutching with bony hands at pale cloud-shadows,  
Crying for love, with only stars to shelter them,  
Choking at last the worms with their gaunt sinews.

This is brown earth fresh from the plowman's turning,  
Sweetening with milky-smelling vapors all the air;  
Murmurous with the sound of life tongues speaking,  
The quiet speech of little grass-blades growing,  
The thunderous urge of life-waves upward thrusting,  
To break against the yellow sandals of the Sun.

This is brown earth, sweet with the South Wind's breathing,  
The light of stars, and the slim moons in silver girded,  
Washed by the menstrual flow of tides,  
With scarves of plum-bough whitely streaming.  
This is brown earth from which all things resolve,  
The new fledged bird and cities skyward towering,  
Birth-pangs, and death  
More quiet than an oak tree's breathing,  
Young maidens soft and warm, and roundly breasted,  
Slim priests red-lipped, with eyes like caverns shadowed,  
The lilac's perfume Summer winds caressing,  
And age which yellows people like old gravestones  
That, chipped and vine-encrusted,  
Slip bit by bit back to the earth again.

I do not know in what far glory stars are born,  
I only know that as fruit-buds foretell a ripened harvest,  
Wheat-kernels buried in the warm, receptive earth  
Beget more grain,  
And the down-digging tendrils of lush grass  
Mean fattened herds,  
So move the stars  
Within their fair, far-swinging orbits,

Shedding pale benedictions from the sky,  
Treading the dead and windswept silences  
Where flaming cities once have lain,  
Moving with whitely silent scorn  
Above this ignominy of upheaped stone,  
Shrill with a threnody of grotesque laughter,  
And sullen with insistent plea for bread.

I know that I have sat beside a growing hedge  
Which sent long shadows toward me on the ground,  
And faintly between it and myself there came  
The consciousness of a thin life-wave beating,  
A reaching out with strength invisible,  
So that I knew it breathed in tune with me.  
Life always reaches out to life  
In a swift ecstasy of touching hands and lips,  
In slow upcreeping toward the golden Sun,  
In its reluctant earthward slipping.

Ah, praise the ever fertile loins of the Sun,  
The Sun that walks with glitterous feet  
The body of the warm brown earth down-pressing,  
The welder of the mystic and continuous circle  
Of death in life and life in death outreaching!

Ah! praise the Sun! The golden-sandaled Mystery!  
The beauty of whose evening passion lays like thunder  
Across the amorous waiting of the Western sky,  
Until the startled night pulls down her curtain  
And sets the candle of the futile moon aglow.

Ah! praise the Sun who has made female all the fields  
And big with growing,  
Whose lips have swept the cool-tipped mountains  
Until they poured their joy in silver leaping,  
Life springs from out his hot and gilded sandals,  
The festering lips of battlefields grow sweet again  
Breathing forth tender flowers and clambering vine  
And the hen-sparrow chirping to her young.  
From out of musty tombs he wakens new life-atoms  
And crumbled stones he quarries and upthrusts again.



# AMERICANA

## ALABAMA

THE training of an ecclesiastic in the heart of the Bible country, as described by John Temple Graves II in the *Birmingham Age-Herald*:

When Charlie Hundley appears in the pulpit of the Shades Mountain Baptist Church next Sunday evening to preach his first sermon, his own story will be sermon enough for any congregation. Although he is twenty-one years of age, his education up to last Winter consisted of nothing more than the first five grades of grammar-school. Determined to make up for lost time and to qualify himself for the ministry to which he felt himself called, he has managed to cover three years of grammar-school work in the six months since last mid-term and the close of Summer school. This Fall he has been admitted to high-school, and next Sunday he will stand in his first pulpit.

## CALIFORNIA

SCIENTIFIC advertisement in the Los Angeles *Herald and Express*:

An amazing new scientific process for concentrating ocean vegetation at low temperatures, retaining the full NATURAL values of the vitamins and minerals, is doing wonders for people suffering from many ailments caused by mineral starvation and gland weakness.

Deficiency of minerals often causes goitre, over and underweight, loss of sexual vigor, falling hair, and complexions, susceptibility to colds, influenza, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, hay fever, arthritis, high and low blood pressure, anemia, constipation, rheumatism, eczema, kidney, liver and bladder disorders.

If you feel run-down, tired, lacking in pep and ability to work and play, try tak-

ing six tablets of IOKELP every day. IOKELP contains Vitamins A, B, G, E, and hundreds of times as much vital mineral elements as vegetables, fruits, eggs, meat, etc.

## CONNECTICUT

THE progress of Christian decorum at Hartford, as reported by the Associated Press:

"The Governor's beer must go through."

With this as the rallying cry, a consignment of beer destined for Governor Wilbur L. Cross and other officials attending the Windsor tercentenary, yesterday passed through the lanes of striking truckers.

One group of pickets halted the truck, but F. E. Crowther, business agent for the strikers' union, hastened to the scene and informed the truckmen of their error.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

UNITED PRESS dispatch from Washington, the home of miracles:

Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, Negro evangelist, has been explaining his religion accompanies him even into auto accidents.

Elder Michaux's imported \$20,000 No. 1 automobile was in the shop the other day. So was his imported \$14,000 No. 2 car.

So, en route between Washington and Annapolis the elder sped in a shiny borrowed car driven by a chauffeur. There was an accident.

"When the car turned over," the elder Michaux related, "the only thing I could say was: 'Lord save me! Lord save me! Lord save me!'"

"When I had said that three times the car landed on my head. I found my neck wasn't broken and said: 'Thank you, Jesus.'"

Michaux was not injured.

## ILLINOIS

PUBLIC notice in the *Nokomis Free Press-Progress*:

I wish to make the statement that the report that has been circulated in Wenonah and Nokomis to the effect that I was responsible for Sam Valenti's condition is untrue. I further wish to say that his condition was caused by the nagging of Wenonah boys.

MRS. SAM VALENTI

FROM the situations-wanted columns of the *Chicago Tribune*:

Astrological engineer and computer, calculator and economist for stock and grain market trends, charts, curves and statistics. Expert horoscope compiler. Address E 283, *Tribune*.

## INDIANA

FROM the *Peru Republican*:

Standing on a corner, not meaning to do any harm to anyone, the editor of the *Republican* was agreeably surprised when the Rev. C. F. Golden, of Denver, jumped out of his automobile and thrust the price of a year's subscription into the publisher's hands, and before the money was put away Carl Fisher, the school truck driver and auctioneer of Mexico, came across the street, and he, too, paid for a year's subscription. To hundreds of others let us say that we will be on the same corner at five o'clock tonight.

## MARYLAND

FROM the *Baltimore Southern Methodist*:

FREE! FREE!

THE SMALLEST READABLE  
BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Given absolutely free, through the courtesy of this publication, with each One Dollar Order of *Biblical Jig-Saws*. Four stirring subjects: *The Ascension; Jesus, the Light of the World; The Last Supper; Easter Morn*. The prints are copies of old masterpieces, in the same beautiful colors that made the originals famous. One hundred

and fifty jig-saw pieces, cleanly cut. An inspiring, wholesome, and educational pastime.

FOR THIRTY DAYS ONLY!

## MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC notice in the *Wellesley Townsman*:

*To whom it may concern:*

The undersigned is tired of being rated as the Town Fool. Some years ago I spoke on the unpopular side of a question at Town Meeting. Somebody started the story that I was crazy. The stigma has stuck to me ever since. I don't believe that I am crazy and I ought to know, for I am with myself all of the time and I have not caught myself doing anything crazy, so let up on it. Why pick on me?

CORNELIUS A. DRISCOLL

780 Worcester Street  
Wellesley

## MINNESOTA

FROM a Christian reader of the *Duluth News-Tribune*:

I have found that people who devoutly worship a Higher Being are in every way superior to the scoffers and disbelievers.

*Duluth*

DAVID AHLSTRAND

FROM the church page of the *Minneapolis Tribune*:

THREE INSPIRING  
SPIRITUAL LECTURES

By

DR. F. HOMER CURTISS of Washington  
President of the Universal Religious Foundation, Inc., and the Order of Christian Mystics. Co-author of "The Voice of Isis," etc.

Wednesday—THOUGHT POWER and how to use it. Illustrated with actual photographs of thought-forms.

Thursday—PERSONAL SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH, with physical proofs; including spirit pictures of three former Presidents, Sir A. Conan Doyle, etc., spirit autographs, fingerprints, fairies, etc. and the only actual picture of Jesus the Christ.

Friday—THE MYSTERY OF THE SECOND COMING. Fact or Fancy? Answering the claims of many.

COLONIAL HALL, REPUBLIC HOTEL  
Questions answered. Phone your friends.  
Collection.

FROM the same:

### SOULFUL SCIENCE OF SIKH-SAVIORS

Be Sure to Hear Free Lectures by  
DR. B. S. THIND

OCTOBER 1—Sunday, 3 P.M.—“Sub-Conscious Mind” and how to make your dreams come true by at-onement, Resurrection and Ascension.

8 P.M.—The highest technique of Concentration, Super-Concentration, Meditation, Realization and Consecration.

COLONIAL ROOM, HOTEL WEST  
Fifth and Hennepin Minneapolis

### MISSOURI

THE progress of clean sport in Kansas City:

It used to be dancing and walking marathons that drew the curious. Now it is to be an ice-sitting contest. Promoters of a show here announced they will present a marathon with ten couples, attired in bathing suits, seeing which can remain on 200-pound blocks of ice the longest.

### MONTANA

PUBLIC pronunciamento in the Bozeman *Daily Chronicle*:

Gentlemen:—There is a certain young man in our city that in time is going to prove himself a menace to us. He is a young married man with a lovely family and a respectable job. He insists on going out with our daughter. Do you think, gentlemen, that we should respect a man like that and let him hold a job in our city when some other honest young fellow that is respectable could hold it and appreciate it? Do you think, gentlemen, we should give him our patronage and friendship? Perhaps we

could give him another chance to prove he can be loyal and true; if he can prove that, then we shall be glad to be his friends; if not, then, we shall see.

A CITIZEN

### NEW JERSEY

TRAVEL notes in the *Hudson Dispatch* of Union City:

The beauties of the Lakes of Killarney in Ireland and the difficulty of finding a good American chocolate ice-cream soda in Paris were two of the points which interested the members of the Eighth Ward Women's Democratic League of Jersey City, last evening, when their president, Freeholder Mrs. Katherine Brown, described for them the trip to Europe which she and Mr. Brown took during the Summer.

### NEW YORK

A READER of the *Times* asks a tough one:

New York, New Jersey and Delaware were lashed by a death-dealing storm after they voted repeal. Dead, dying and wounded in a Texas cyclone followed a few days after repeal was voted there. Was it chance or wrath?

H. L. FRENCH

Potsdam, N. Y.

### OHIO

ECCLESIASTICAL intelligence in the eminent Cleveland *Plain Dealer*:

The automobile in which Col. Charles A. Lindbergh rode with the late Ambassador Myron T. Herrick from the flying field to the American embassy in Paris following his flight across the Atlantic in May, 1927, will be exhibited on the lawn of First Universalist Church, Lorain and Butternut Ridge roads, North Olmsted, tomorrow afternoon.

FROM the Swaps column of the Cincinnati *Enquirer*:

HAVE complete course, “How to Become a Success,” will swap for room rent. Address Box S 129, care the *Enquirer*.

## OREGON

EDUCATIONAL news item in the Myrtle Creek *Mail*, the jewel of Douglas county:

Jay Chaney, Jr., who was graduated from the Myrtle Creek High-school in the class of '32, is intending to attend school at Albany College the coming year. Jay will play on the college baseball team in exchange for a scholarship in that institution of learning.

FROM the *Seattle Star*:

*Editor, The Star:* Although the States are voting wet—legally and morally these elections should not count, because it is clear that a person who wants the return of liquor is not capable of voting properly, and **SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CAST A VOTE**. If there was a law that anyone who drank could not vote you'd find this a dry country soon.

MRS. AGNES DENMANSON

## SOUTH CAROLINA

POLITE orgies of the élite of Greenville, as reported by the *Atlanta Constitution*:

When the Eastern Air Transport inaugurated the night passenger service from Atlanta to New York, delegations met the big Condor plane all along the route. At Greenville, S. C., the officials and passengers were met by the mayor and his official family, accompanied by fourteen beautiful young girls, who acted as a Greek chorus of welcome, bringing gifts for each masculine passenger. They presented them with attractive pajamas and nightcaps manufactured in Greenville mills, and a blood-red lipstick ornamented each nightcap.

Mayor James L. Key was very fetching in his outfit, his strong Roman features being especially set off by the jaunty and becoming little nightcap, with the festive lipstick decorating the side of the cap. Aboard the airplane were Harold Elliott, general manager of the Eastern Air Trans-

port, and John K. Ottley, Jr., the division superintendent, who displayed the same sportsmanship as Mayor Key and arrayed themselves in pajamas and nightcaps.

## WEST VIRGINIA

PROGRESS in Christian ethics, as disclosed by the United Press correspondent in Wheeling:

If the pulpit is not paying well, the Rev. Elias J. Knoch, former pastor of St. Stephen's Church, has pointed the way to make both ends meet.

He has turned to selling beer.

The Rev. Mr. Knoch now owns and operates the Golden Horse Shoe, a sandwich shop in the downtown district. Beer signs are displayed prominently.

The reverend, however, has carried over with him into the new business a keen sense of ethics and propriety. If the beer is flat the Reverend Knoch is said to tell his customers about that failing, or if the beer is not as cold as it should be, he seldom fails to inform his customers of that fact.

## HAWAII

THE NAVY takes to Economy:

FOURTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT  
PEARL HARBOR, T.H.

## OFFICER'S CIRCULAR NO. 93-33

*Subject:* Return of calling cards to Officers.

1. In these times of strictly enforced personal economy, it has been suggested that a considerable saving could be effected for individual officers if their widely distributed calling cards were returned to them.

2. The Aide to the Commandant will be glad to forward to their original owners, *via* the Offices of their Commanding Officers, such cards as are delivered to his office. It is therefore suggested that when a considerable number of cards are collected, they be turned in to the Aide to the Commandant.

D. E. SMITH,  
*Aide to Commandant*

# REFUGE

BY OSCAR OSTLUND

MY RETREAT from the Depression was a hunting-camp in a secluded gap of the Pennsylvania mountains. The location caught my eye the first time I saw it. That was on a hike in 1929. I rambled on past it then, but the place lingered in my memory. A year and a half later I was back. Several things had happened. I had become acquainted with the owners of the camp and had their permission to live there. I had saved \$1,500. And I was no longer a single hiker. I returned to Spectacle Gap with Lenore on the day of our wedding.

At the end of two years we had spent \$1,041.60.

My income totaled seventy-five cents.

Savings left over: \$459.50.

Rent cost us nothing. When the question of what I owed them came up, the owners decided that my protection to the place squared that. We bought no fuel, for there was dead timber on all sides of us. We paid no bills for water or refrigeration. An icy cold spring, a dozen steps from the porch, took care of that. Our light bill ran to about fifteen cents a month, the price of a gallon of kerosene. We got along with simple clothes. Laundry, done by a farmer's wife, cost us a dollar a month. Our chief expense was for food.

In the beginning it ran somewhat high—high, that is, as the scale went in the backwoods. The reason was that we splurged, being newcomers, and didn't

manage as well as we did later. The first month's bill for groceries and meat came to \$26.35, or eighty-five cents a day for the two of us. The cost of six meals in town was \$4.90. This last pained us, and we swore off eating in tea-rooms, and thereafter saved money by packing our lunches for shopping trips.

All the furnishings we bought for the camp were included in this first month's expenses. The bill was \$11.55 and the items were:

|                                     |        |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Fifteen yards of studio cloth @ 35c |        |
| a yard                              | \$5.25 |
| Ten yards of theatrical gauze @ 15c |        |
| a yard                              | 1.50   |
| One India print cloth               | 1.90   |
| Two deck chairs                     | 2.90   |

Other expenses for the month were:

|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Oil and gas for the car | 3.90    |
| Tobacco                 | 2.50    |
| Small kitchen articles  | 1.96    |
| Ax                      | 2.75    |
|                         | <hr/>   |
|                         | \$22.66 |

Total expenses for the month, \$53.91

The bill for the next month dropped to \$32.13, the following month it was \$30.59, and the fourth month, \$24.88. We didn't skimp: we were simply learning how to live in the woods.

For two Summer months, while Lenore took a vacation trip with her family, I managed to live well on about a dollar a week. It was no great feat. A good part of my diet was right in the woods. The

streams provided trout and eels. I had my pick of six different fruits: juneberries, cherries, apples and peaches in abandoned orchards, dewberries and huckleberries on the slopes. When I went out for groceries I brought back roasting ears, string beans, potatoes, bacon and milk. I paid a farmer twenty cents for the whole load. He was glad to get rid of it, and his wife now and then threw in a poke full of cookies to boot.

Our occasional week-end guests didn't add anything to our cost of living. They invariably brought food for themselves, and for their hosts as well. It was, of course, contrary to the precedents of hospitality, but we all agreed that it had to be that way on the mountain. There was no telephone and no mail man. Visitors couldn't tell us when to expect them.

My earnings were unpremeditated, the results of two deals with a mountaineer. He offered me fifty cents for a puppy and twenty-five cents for an old pair of grab-chains and I let him have them at his own price. I found the chains on a ridge. The puppy was the offspring of a stray gip who came to us the second week in camp.

## II

The arrival of a strange couple, hauling their household goods back to a remote camp where no family ever had lived before, was sensational news which spread through the mountain settlements like grease over a hot griddle. Many guessed that I was in the woods for no good reason, and in the general sifting of probabilities I figured as (1) a detective, (2) a fugitive from justice, (3) a lunatic, and (4) an author coming back to Nature for a masterpiece.

I feared at first that we might be troubled in our solitary home by curious

or suspicious visitors, by hoodlums or prowlers. Lit up at night, a small bright spot in the deep surrounding darkness, the camp had a disquietingly conspicuous and defenseless look. In the full glare of the lamp we seemed to be moving on a stage before sinister spectators, anywhere out there in the black shadows of the forest. But these were the fears of a newcomer, and they never materialized, for the people who came to camp and those we met in the settlements were all decent and neighborly.

We faced, of course, the risk of thieves while we were absent. The same gang that had been breaking into the vacant camp might come back again. So if we left the place for a half day or longer, the windows had to be secured and the heavy shutters bolted from the inside. Every time we went out we had to fasten and unfasten eight nuts and bolts. My only weapons of defense were the stove poker and the ax.

Spectacle Gap had no small renown locally as a haunt of rattlesnakes. The natives had warned us against this risk and one night on our return from town we met it in the flesh. The rattler introduced himself with a flutter as we came up on the porch and set our groceries down. The flutter came from a pair of bed springs. It was dark and we imagined that a bird was caught in the springs. I went into the cabin and brought out a flashlight.

A bright yellow rattler in striking pose takes the spotlight very well. The sight was exciting to me, and to Lenore, who held all the popular beliefs about the rattler's ferocity, it was terrifying. She rushed in and closed the door. I tried to get the rattler with a stick, but he was safe in the springs. I roused him out several times but he slid back in his stronghold before I could do him any harm.



When the skirmish had gone on for some time, I heard a war whoop from my ally. She had built a roaring fire under the tea kettle. A new weapon was offered to me—scalding water. The idea was ingenious, but I declined to fight with a tea kettle. Suddenly the rattler slithered out into the open and I polished him off with a stick.

Late one night, about a week later, I started a mad whirr by opening the door. This rattler this time was partly on the threshold. The sudden flood of light scared it, and it slid off into the woods, but I pursued and finished it. Eleven rattlers in all crawled into camp. All but the first were easy to get rid of. Our only danger was the danger of stepping on them at night, or the chance of them crawling into the cabin if we left the door open. It was a small risk.

The camp stood well up in the gap on a shelf of Blacklog Mountain. One side was snugly sheltered by the ridge. The other sides looked out upon the hills.

The cabin, a one-room affair, twenty by forty feet, had a wild and woolly appearance when we first walked in. It was a hunters' den pure and simple. The most obtrusive interior furnishing was a nondescript assortment of bedding which expressed the individual tastes and circumstances of some thirty different hunters. It was piled in double-deck bunks which ran from wall to wall at the far end of the room. More pillows and quilts dangled from cross beams. Old clothes hung on every hook. The tables and shelves were filled with odds and ends. The contents of many mattresses, ripped by hobnails and perforated by mice, had oozed out over the floor.

The bedding had to be aired and sunned before I could store it. Out in the open it covered a network of clothes-lines. What we saw of the mountain we saw in strips

here and there between quilts. This lasted for over a week, for it rained or snowed every other day. It was a week of hard labor for me. I spent a good part of it under a mattress, going in or out according to the weather. I had sixteen mattresses to handle, twenty-three pillows, and thirty-seven blankets and quilts. The best of it was finally stowed in a corner of the upper bunk, the rest of it out in a shed. The old clothes went into the same shed, and the other surplus things were put in boxes. Then we dusted and scrubbed. The cabin began to look habitable.

But it took some feminine touches to erase all the earmarks of the camp. That was the reason for Lenore's importations—the articles already mentioned, other things she had bought in Europe, and her wedding gifts. As a working foundation she had two board tables, twenty feet long, four benches, and two antique chairs. The table on the sunny side of the room was dressed up for recreation. It took the India print as a cover, and a brass candelabrum as a centerpiece. There was room on it for books, magazines, a cigarette box, some bronze bowls, and other bric-a-brac. Kenilworth ivy trailed down from a window-shelf at the far end.

The table on the opposite side of the room served a double purpose. I used one end as a writing desk, and the other end, next to the stove, was our dining table. It was decked out with a fringed mari-gold luncheon set. A striped Roman blanket hung on this side of the room. The studio cloth of old gold was used to shut out the rough board bunks. It was put up in sections, like a sleeping car curtain, on a wire that ran from wall to wall.

The theatrical gauze was made into curtains for the windows. There were four of them, each about two-and-a-half feet

square. They filled the room with light. It streamed through the gauze and spread a glow of cheer under our humble roof. It was pleasant in the mornings to see oak leaf shadows bobbing on the floor. The cabin became part of a halcyon world, unhurried, untroubled. Fresh scents poured in from the woods and the airy music of birds. It was no place to worry about the Depression. There was nobody in the neighborhood to bring us tales of calamity. We had no household cares to fret about. There were no social anxieties.

### III

We had two shopping routes. Up the gap we hiked, three and a half miles to a farm. Down the gap we drove to town, twenty-six miles away.

The first mile was a gamble, a deserted stretch of logging road, by turns narrow, stony, twisting, rutty, soggy and steep. A half mile from camp it dived into the rough and tumble channel of Licking Creek. Across the creek it curved sharply up a steep incline, and then climbed steadily till it met a well-kept State forest-road. It took us longer to drive the first mile than the other twenty-five. When I got the car out on the State road I considered myself practically in town, and I'd say to Lenore: "It's time to get out the shopping list."

There were boulders to bust the crankcase unless I jockeyed over and around them. There were spring holes to get stuck in. There were bumpy climbs to snap a spring. If I got off ever so little on a hair-pin turn the car would snag a sapling, and it would get wedged between the bumper and tire. In chopping it out a slip of the ax was worth \$6, the price of a tire.

Intermittent labor with crowbar, shovel, pick and ax cut down the hazards, but the

drive remained a game of chance. However, no mishaps attended it. The car was never stuck. Nothing was damaged. Even the tires outlasted their normal expectancy, and one of the originals, still on the car, has rolled over 27,000 miles.

The worst feature was the time element. It was a mean stretch to cover if we wanted to get out of the gap in a hurry. We had the creek to reckon with too. Heavy rains could swell it and leave the car shut up in the gap. We ended this risk by leaving the car at the far side of the creek. After that all supplies had to be carried from it a half mile.

I didn't mind being a sumpter-horse, but I was much puzzled about getting my load organized. All the provisions scattered around in the car had to be mobilized in one large sack. Parcels of tender contents had to have a particular cranny, or the eggs would be scrambled, the fruit crushed, and the pastry pulverized. The bulk of what I considered a heavy load (about seventy pounds) was distributed as follows:

On my back: sugar, flour, corn meal, canned goods, potatoes, fruit, meat, butter, eggs, soap and magazines.

In one hand: a five-gallon can of kerosene.

In the other hand: a gallon of milk in a heavy thermos jug.

I hit the trail for the farm when we had a washing to take out, or when we wanted to vary our diet with chicken, home-cured meat and other farm produce.

With a good new cook-book to start with, Lenore built up a kitchen library by going through the household magazines and clipping out the coupons of the food product companies. I noticed a visible increase in the bulk of our mail. My pack-sack bulged with booklets on meats and pastries, and manuals on baking powder.

New victuals began to appear on our table—bran muffins, ginger bread, corn bread, brown betty, baked custard, puddings and desserts. Our bill at the butcher-shop in town dropped as Lenore learned how to make cheap cuts of meat palatable and tender. Stuffed flank steak was one of them: it became a standby.

I introduced a recipe for *raspe komla*, a Norwegian potato dumpling cooked in pork-shank broth. This cut, something on the order of German knuckles, sold for eight cents a pound. Out of it we got a big dinner and several lunches. The whole cost was about twenty-five cents.

Our stove looked like an antique, but it did the work if good fuel were fed into it. This put some research up to me. I dragged in all the varieties I could lay my hands on, and then found out, by experimentation, what they were good for. Eventually I had the fuel department systematized, with wood for each special purpose in a separate box. One box was for tinder—pitch pine slivers, sassafras and chips; another for a hot fast fire—dry chestnut and butternut; another for a lasting fire—locust, hickory and oak; another held damp scrubby fuel for a slow fire.

The old wood stove was a bright spot in the cabin. It glowed at night and roared briskly in the morning. Ten minutes after the match was struck the kettle began to sing. A moment later the fumes of coffee filled the room.

#### IV

Authorities on Nature speak of an effect known variously as the Spell of the Woods, or the Presence of the Forest. Whatever it is, I felt it—a kind of enchantment that lightened my tasks so that no fixed line could be drawn between jobs and diversions.

The most agreeable sensations were frequently kindled by the simplest tasks. While I poked about, the simplicity and charm of life in the woods impressed itself pleasantly on four separate senses. I touched it with my hands and saw it in the bloom of my surroundings. It came to me in sounds and odors from the forest. Picking up dry sticks became equivalent to an act of grace. I found unction in the crowbar, sacraments in the woodpile.

At a time when the whole country was worrying over bad investments I went to Mifflintown and invested \$2.75 in a good heavy ax. That money represented the total cost of our fuel bill for two years. All of our firewood was chopped. I had no use for a saw.

Most of the satisfactions that backwoodsmen get out of firearms, fist fights, playing cards and nerve tonics I got out of that ax. When I drove it through the center of a sapling, it proved that I had a good eye and steady nerves. When one blow split a twenty-foot pole, clean from end to end, I felt that I had the power of a thunderbolt.

The first tree I hacked into was in front of the camp. A good place, I thought, to show what I could do with the new ax. It happened to be a big gum tree, and I never monkeyed with another. I learned in this way, by trial and error, which trees chop and burn the best. I had fun prospecting for dead timber, and learning to identify it by its grain, color and pith. When I had got the poles to the chopping-block the heaviest part of my work was done. I could cut enough fuel for a day in thirty minutes. I never spoiled the pleasure of my ax by overdoses.

We got along without radio or phonograph. We didn't have, and we felt no hankering for, any of the popular time-killers, such as jig-saw puzzles and

murder mysteries. We played no bridge. The nearest telephone was six miles away, and sixty feet up in the air, in a firetower. Most of our pastimes inhered in our surroundings. Lenore brought her knitting needles, a Brownie kodak, a cook book, and a portfolio of cabin plans to which she made additions from time to time. I brought a guitar, an instruction book, a portable typewriter and plenty of paper.

When we opened the book of an author with something to say we didn't have to skip through it. We could spend a week reading and discussing one small volume and life went on just the same. The beliefs expressed in the *Forum's* roundup of living philosophers were as good as a rodeo in Spectacle Gap. Other philosophers who made nice nibbling on the mountain were Herbert Spencer, Bertrand Russell, Ghandi, Santayana, Besant, Lippmann, Marcus Aurelius—and Arnold Bennett. The most used book in the library was Illick's "Pennsylvania Trees."

Spectacle Camp was an outdoor theater and we were spectators at a continuous show. The changes in light and shade began in the morning before the sun got into our level of the gap, and all through the day different moods and phases came and went. On wet and misty days we had a new world to look out upon. Patterns changed, the hemlocks were as green flames above the fog, and the breath of the forest was freshly scented.

We saw the coming of spring from its first faint detail, a patch of pink buds on a slope, to its sweeping climax. We saw month after month the progressive phases of each seasonal pageant. An air of novelty lingered around us, an impression that we had just arrived. The spice of adventure gave a fillip to our doings. The animation of the mountain was contagious.

We had fun exploring and getting ac-

quainted with the primitive area in which we lived. Tram roads crossed from one deserted gap to another; antique wagon roads skirted along the ridges; winding trails followed the banks of streams. It was a hikers' paradise, and it all belonged to us.

## V

A person who likes to roam in the woods is supposed to be a student of something or other—rocks, flora, or wild life. I studied none of these things. My enjoyment of the woods was passive. I came to know the names of the trees, but I made an emotional acquaintance with them first. Their effects were better known to me than their pedigrees.

Many of my hours were used up in dawdling around abandoned farms and logging camps, old mills, and other ruins. I was fascinated by these relics of life that had been there and passed on. I found many coves that were pleasant to linger in, and by and by we had a variety of places to go to. We gave them names.

The Cathedral was a small clearing in a fine stand of spruce. We went there to loaf and read. Jones's Beach was a sandy strip that converged on an eddy of Licking Creek. We swam there, took sun baths, and ate dinner on the beach. The Bear Field had an apple tree scratched up by clawing bears. A little run made a wide sweep around this field and ridges sloped in upon it from all sides. Spectacle Bath was our tub, a deep clear eddy at the base of a white pine. It was near the camp, well sheltered and the bank above the tub had green plushy carpets of moss. In Summer the air circulating along the stream kept it cool and fresh on the most sweltering day.

I spent many pleasant hours in the

shanty of Paddy McCarrick, who lived in the gap next to mine. He was a molder by trade but when the general layoff came he retired to the mountain. He was known as the Mayor of Licking Creek. This title, like most everything else in his life, was honorary. He had honorary memberships in three good camps. His annual fishing license was honorary: the fee paid by the donors was equivalent to a guarantee that they would bring home at least one full basket of trout. His groceries, clothing, and liquor were likewise included in the honorary scheme of his life.

Most of his clients belonged to one of the three camps in his bailiwick. Some of them were rich and he gave them what they wanted: that was the secret of his livelihood, which he honestly earned. Whether his clients had luck or not there would be a platter of trout on the table, for Paddy himself could land enough to feed them all.

But his duties as guide and provider were minor compared with his social duties. They covered all of the emergencies that are bound to pop up at stag parties in the woods. Paddy met them as they came along, sometimes arbitrarily, but never ineffectively. If refreshments ran low he knew where to go for more. If a cloudy situation menaced the life of the party he would dispel it with a yarn, or he might swing a vicious haymaker into the source of the tempest. I have known him to break his hand on some guest merely to remind him that there were limits of deportment even in a hunting-camp.

The worst scrap that I knew about was caused by a pet, a wild turkey which Paddy had tamed so that it came to his door and ate out of his hand. That turkey disappeared on a crisp November day. Paddy was in town that day. Some time

later, a befuddled camper took a notion to cross-examine the mayor on the fate of his pet. He answered the first question with a smashing uppercut. It took three successive lacings to convince the other fellow that his turkey talk was in bad taste. The last time the mayor put him out he stayed out for the night, unconscious.

Usually a warning from Paddy did the trick. He'd fix a pair of game eyes on the offender and say: "If you ain't a good fellow now, Brownie, c'mon outside and I'll make one out of you in a minute."

He was at his best when I found him alone. On these occasions anecdotes, hyperbole and philosophy rolled off his tongue. Once he told me the story of an eccentric Dutchman who drew fabulous profits from everything he laid his hands on. "If you dropped him in a backhouse, he'd come up with a piano on his neck." The same Dutchman made a tour of Europe without a piece of baggage. "He bought himself a pair of rubbers, got on a boat, and was gone for three months."

Paddy wasn't an easy man to stick in an argument. A roving committee once found this out. The committee was out for subscriptions to supplement the salary of a priest. Paddy had nothing to give, and the following exchange ensued:

COMMITTEE: Oh, c'mon Paddy, be a good fellow. You know the priest has to live.

PADDY: Saaay, when the Standard Steel couldn't pay me any longer they laid me off. If you can't pay the priest, *lay 'im off!*

Paddy had a theology which he stated clearly and briefly: "First we believe in Sandy Claus. We get wise to him and then comes the Lord. By and by we get down to Justice. And that sticks."

He was the only tutor I ever had in the art of story-telling. I hope to go back to the mountain some day and take the rest of my course.

# SIEGE OF LOVE

BY EUGENE JOFFE

I TELL you I am through with this city, and with playing in bands, and with going to dances, and with spending my never-dying Summers in country hotels. Let me just pray together about twenty dollars, and I will rush myself down to Grand Central and get a ticket to as far away as that money will take me. I tell you I have got to catapult myself into absolute strangeness and hostility, or else cut my crazy heart out and kick it down the subway steps.

Sometimes I have to go to New York on a wonderfully dull and hopeless mission and I set out with a wonderful calm and without thought or feeling or expectation, and then before I have had time to wet my lips I am looking at the name of the station we have just stopped at—Bowling Green—*Bowling Green!* my terrible heart screams mercilessly at me and at once there is that slow-pained constriction, before I can close my eyes there is that terribly conscious breathing that my body cannot combat and immediately I think and feel and live helplessly over again that Sunday afternoon when the whole bunch of us came home from Lakewood with that poor girl who got so much sad pleasure out of calling herself an actress.

Let me say at once that although the girl was not very pretty and not very smart she was nice, she was nice, I can't tell you how nice she was, how her all-inclusive niceness covered and cancelled and conquered everything about her that wasn't attracting,

and all the days we were at the hotel she was nice to all of us, but no more than nice because one of the actors on the social staff was temporarily her husband and all of us knew it and talked about it, and then on that last day, I tell you on that last day, when we were all to go home, the actors on the staff got an overnight job at another hotel and the girl got nothing and so she said she'd go home with us, and she did.

I tell you she got on that train with the five of us and the seats were for twos and the four other fellows got sitting together and Ruth and I sat together and we'd hardly settled ourselves before she turned to me brightly and said, Want to smoke? and I said, All right, having not even half a cigarette on me, and we got up and started for the smoking-car with the fellows eyeing us absolutely unsuspiciously and we sat down and she gave me a cigarette and I lit hers and my heart went out to her. I don't know, I didn't even think of the measly butt, and she wasn't beautiful, but sitting there low on the seat, finishing the dying cigarettes together, with the swift landscape swimming past the closed window, we talked.

I didn't know what in anyone's name to talk to her about, seeing her face so close to mine, seeing her there so nice, so damned neat and nice on the seat beside me, and I said, How does it feel to be an actress? and she said, Well, I'll tell you: a girl in show business usually has a bad



reputation, and I said, That's pretty true, and she said, Well, it all depends on the girl: if she wants to be—, and I said, Why not be bad? it's stacks of fun, and she said, The only time it's worth while is when there's a lot of money in it, and I said, Oh, I don't know, and by God there we were.

Then we all stood shakily on the prow of the ferry, the four fellows in the band eyeing us in coöperative silence and Ruth and I together further front near the rusty gate, with the wind chilling our faces and the coarse swish of the churned water and the fabulous skyline approaching and she holding my arm with both hands and so close, and well, God, I don't know, I was lazy and slow and liking it and still beside her on the train-seat and then we reached the other side and we were in New York again and I carried her satchel and we went to the subway, with her walking quickly and quietly beside me and the other fellows apart. We got on the wrong train because we followed my directions and the fellows eyed me and I sat leaning against Ruth, half closing my eyes and my hat nearly heavy on my lap and her cool fingers on my face and near my ready lips, and when we had to change trains again we stood together in a corner of the dark platform staggering against each other.

I don't know, it was as if we were drunk or sleepy, but there I was mooning over her and holding her and kissing her until we got to Bowling Green, where we all had to change again and she had to take a different train, and we all got out and stood there with the instruments piled around us. The two of us stood looking at each other smiling each other's names and leaning together against a black post, and then a train came and we all got in and left Ruth standing there alone without even the instruments around her, and I

stood in the train looking dopily out of the window at her as if I were drunk or groggy, and then we were in the black and Ruth wasn't there, and the fellows said, Suppose you'll be riding out to Long Island tonight to see her, and I said, I haven't even got her address.

I tell you I just have to see BOWLING GREEN on that station and my eyes go as sick as if they were sixty years old and my heart begins that beating and I remember Ruth as if it's only yesterday that I've held her, and I say I don't know what to myself. I see her standing there with her coat wrapped prettily about her body and her eyes watching me and her lips doing all they ever could to smile and I know that she still means something breath-defying to me. I tell you when I got home that night I could feel the love waiting to rise in me, I could feel myself paling with love.

My mother and father and little sister met me and the longer I was nice with them the more I wanted to rush out and find Ruth. How could I get to see her, I prayed, and when I went to bed I knew how tired I was, but I couldn't sleep, I couldn't stop my mind from moaning about her, and the next morning there was that slow indefinite ache right below my throat and I felt so old and fatigued I was ready to cry like a baby and burn the sheets over my chest, and by God, now all I have to do is see that damned station, BOWLING GREEN, and my breath changes like before illness and my sight and feeling and heartbeats change and I get a thought and a need and a longing of love that are frightening to have.

## II

I go to a dance alone and there is a girl fixing her hair before a mirror and I tell her, You look nice, because she does, and

she answers, Thank you, and I say, smiling at myself, Don't thank me: dance with me. We are talking like children but you will never know it as deeply as I do, and in five minutes I am dancing with her slow and close and lifting and after about three dances she says, Tell me about yourself, and I say, What's there to tell? I'm just another guy, and we stand or sit there talking and before I've intended it my hand is on the far side of her and her arm is around me and whether it is dark or not I can see her eyes saying All right and I kiss her fully.

We dance and sit together and kiss and I am guiding her body against mine or halting it between my hands and all the time I can feel it living through the minutes with a softness and a pitifulness and a sadness that are enough to break a giant's heart. I tell you I am helplessly in love and don't want to go home, don't want to see again anyone I've ever seen before, don't want to move three inches without that girl's hand touching mine. I don't care where in this blind city she lives, I'll take her to her very room and the more miles out of the way the better, and if we get home with the dawn or stumble across the streets with the milkmen's new cars riding quietly past us, we end up together in her hallway with no longer a feeling for space and I am kissing her and holding her and blindly ruining her dress and all.

We talk and move there as if we are drunk or dying and I am surging with love, afraid that it is nearly morning and knowing that soon I will hear her say, I've got to be in school in two hours—, or I've got to go to work now—, or I'll get killed as soon as I go in. I tell you, to sit alone before a window any night or afternoon and remember this living time—

So it is after breakfast when I finally force myself to stumble into my house and

my father has for hours been preparing himself to open my spine and my mother's face is tear-wet and stricken and she moans and my little sister is already in school doing arithmetic and I throw myself down on the undisturbed bed and feel that my heart is cracking and that I will be dead before many months, and it is long dark days before I can even begin to think of that girl and not immediately strain and beat with world-strong love.

And they are still like new flesh on my palms—those minutes out in the country when I walked across the lawn to wash up before supper with a towel around my neck and the remains of a cake of soap trying to escape through my fingers and there was an auto standing under a tree with the doors open and a man in front and a man standing outside, and looking into the back I saw a woman with a little boy—woman nothing, she held her white hat in her hands and her dress was high over her crossed legs and her face had the beginnings of sadness and if she looked more than eighteen—later I saw her on the porch and later I saw her eating while we played for supper and later I saw her on the lawn again, alone with her little boy, and while I was thinking unhappily if I should go over or not and wondering whether after all I should or I shouldn't she looked toward me and nearly smiled and nearly raised her hand in the beginning of recognition.

You would have done anything for her with her kid sitting there undecided on her lap and her husband and brother-in-law gone back to the city and she all alone in the new hotel and not yet happy at her vacation—well, God, what could I say? Let's go for a walk before we both start bawling, I told her and she laughed in a small but magnificent way and we went down to the road and then carefully over

the dust with her boy trailing behind or scampering in front and we passed the other hotels and she said, You play the piano so nice, and I said, The hell I do, and I moved my fingers a little and got hold of her hand swinging slightly next to mine.

It was like being slapped on my open heart, shaking there at the side of the road and holding her closer and closer against me so full of life, and when I held her and kissed her again at night behind the casino while the band rested I was terribly in love with her, it was as if she had become the center of the hotel, of the country, the season, the center of all my years of life to come and everything that was ever going to happen to me, and I said, Listen, we can't go on just kidding around like this, and she said, I've only met you today, you know I—, and I stuck my fingers angrily into her shoulders and said, Damn it, please don't talk like a baby, and she said, Please, will you please—, and my breath returned a little and I let her shoulders go and she was starting to cry and like praying a little and moaning about against me.

Listen, I shouted noiselessly at her with my fingers in her shoulders, damn it will you please listen? but it was as if she were drunk or falling or drowning in a dream, and late at night when the house lights were all out at last and everyone at last was as concealed as he would ever be in a country hotel I felt myself walking up to her room with a nearly painful pounding in my ears and throat.

The night before she was to go home some fellow took us and another girl for himself for an auto ride out over the fast highways to God knows where, passing through town after sleeping town, crossing railroad track after track, speeding down new desolate highways with the violent country air like heart-opening magic in our nostrils and she and I together over the

back seat with our taut arms around each other and no words leaving our mouths. Even when we stopped somewhere and got out of the car I couldn't tell whether her face was hot or cold against mine, and when we finally did get back at last we heard her boy crying up in his room and they were getting ready to send someone to look for us and we stumbled out of the car into the growing dawn with our bodies tired and vacant and our faces thick and all the towns we had passed through still with me somehow. Now all I have to do is hear or see the name of a place in the mountains and immediately my mind is sure and lost and I am swiftly and powerlessly back and at once the long days and that long night are too full inside me.

When I went to her in the city she would be dressed up to see me and smiling to see if I still liked her, and with that old feeling of love in me I would take her arm and try to speak to her. With the Summer barely dying we would walk together in the park and sit in the cool shade with the kids playing around us and the mothers wheeling the crying baby-carriages and my heart would beat with love and I would feel that old continuous growing in me and so far from my home with so much strangeness around me I would have that utter feeling of unceasing love for her and stroke her arm and say her name with all my weak strength.

She would say, You still love me, you still—, and I would be unable to answer her, unable to tear my body out of its sharp prison and the more times I went to her with trembling caution and the more times we went humbly into the movies and sat pressed together in the dark unable to guess anything about the pictures except when they stopped or began, the more tensely I felt myself fighting through the hours drowning with love. She would walk be-

side me with her brimmed hat low and soft over her forehead and her dress thin and spotless and her cheek powdered and smooth beside my own face and I would whisper to her and breathe against her hat and not know any longer what to do with my head or my tongue or my hands.

I would love her and it would be as if I had no home to go back to, as if I had never been a human creature, as if I had never known what it meant to have parents and a sister and examinations to be passed, and when I got her letter saying please not to come any more the ink and paper seemed unnatural and strange and the whole minutes were like nothing: it was too late for seeing her to be able to have anything to do with anything, too late for it to approach my pounding and invincible love—which has kept growing and beating and staying as relentlessly as the stars.

### III

Last night I played with the band at a dance and package party, and as always before and after the dances there were the usual girls coming up to the platform asking me please to put their pocketbooks up on the piano, and as always I smiled and put them up, and then one girl and another returned a little breathless and asked politely for her pocketbook and there were about seven colors to choose from.

When the package party was to begin they all came together for their pocketbooks and in the talky mess of pushing and choosing and mild wisecracking I noticed one girl standing aside waiting hesitantly till the others were through and I noticed the pale green of her dress and recalled that in slow absent looks over my shoulder as I hit the piano I'd really been seeing her in that pale green all the thin night. She must have been near the stage a lot because

between quick spaced glances at my music when I looked vaguely around the lively hall I must have noticed her often in that pale green dress and when I saw her now I smiled nearly happily and almost in recognition and she smiled back quickly as if she were happy and warmly pleased.

I took the last lonely pocketbook over to her and she accepted it a little doubtfully and said, Thanks, and I said, For what—so early in the evening? and as she began to seek a reply the fellows called me and I said to her, Please wait one second, and when I returned with two sandwiches and gave her one she said, Did you pay for this? as if it cost a dollar, and I said, Go on, go on, and when she knew I hadn't paid for hers she unwrapped it. Didn't you really pay for it? she said over the broad dark sandwich and I made as if to push it into her mouth, and then we ate.

I looked at her. You're about seventeen, I said, chewing, and she said, Nearly eighteen, and I said, I'm twenty,—and I felt myself existing in my suit on the face of the earth and thought to myself that I was twenty. We sat down and I brought her a soda and she said, Didn't you pay for this either? and I said, One more like that, honey babe, and I'll take a poke at you, and she smiled and reddened as if she were really sorry and ashamed and I bent over and kissed her nearly on the cheek, almost missing her mouth, what with the straw in the soda and all.

While they held the package party we walked up and down the hallway and my arm was lightly around her and she held my fingers a little away from her body and said, Tell me about yourself, and I said, What's there to tell? I'm just another guy,—and then I thought and wondered about myself on the earth and I was astonished to hear myself adding, I've finished college and you won't believe it, and

she looked up at me and pondered over my face and said, I believe it, and with self-amazement I added, I just sit around and don't do a damn thing—you'll believe that, and she looked up at me again so readily and smiled with such friendly sympathy that it was impossible to believe she'd just felt it and she held my hand a little less obviously away and there was that mild growing kicking against my heart.

I saw the other fellows eyeing me from their own girls and I turned our backs toward them and said, Tell me about yourself now, and I heard her say that she was in the last term high-school, graduating, and I said, And after that—what? and she said, Work, I guess, if I can find it—perhaps I'll go to college in the evening, and I nodded as if she'd said much more, seeing her life undoubtedly all there, all completed and without flash or surprise and I said, And then marriage—that's how it'll be, won't it? and she said, Yes, I guess so . . . , and looked away as if she didn't know how to begin to speak to me about this immense subject.

There's the girl I came with, she said suddenly, relievedly, and I was introduced to her and very soon she went so tactfully away and my girl said, She's keeping company now, and I said, Is keeping company (the words hurt my mouth) a girl's biggest ambition? and she said as if hardly beginning to talk about an immense subject, Well, I'll tell you, it's nice to go around with someone you know you can trust and know that your feelings are being returned in the right way: most fellows try to get all they can out of a girl and I don't blame them, why shouldn't they have a good time if they can? but the first thought a girl has about a fellow is how far will he try to go, so when you've found someone you like and know you can trust—.

Right, I said as if I were helping her.

You see, she said, reddening a little, wanting to laugh easily, I'm talking very frankly to you. I looked at her and had that real and nameless feeling and soon she said, I couldn't get my mother anything for Mother's Day yesterday, I couldn't save any money at all this year, so I just bought her a card and put it in the envelope and put it in the mailbox and later my mother went down and got it and she said she appreciated the feeling anyway.

I listened to her speaking and watched her face and wondered what my own voice sounded like. We were sitting on a large window sill now with our feet out on a fire escape and our shoes touching and our elbows on our thighs and the side-street pretty dark below us. She told me how she nearly hadn't come to this dance because the dress she was wearing had had to be ironed and while she was doing it the fuse blew out and she got discouraged and disgusted and ran down to her friend's house and told her she wouldn't go, but her friend said it was still early and she should hurry and when she ran back to her house again the janitor had fixed the fuse, but even after this there were troubles and disturbances and hindrances, but finally after all the heartache and the near-tears and the family-talk she got away at last. So here I am, she said, And sorry you've come, I said, and she said, Oh no, I'm glad. I'm glad you've come, I told her, no kidding I am—

Then I had to play again and soon the dancing was over and we were packing up and I saw her standing a calculated distance away beside her girl friend and I remembered how I had looked toward her and thought about her life while I played and I didn't know whether to call her over or not, and while my mind hesitated she and her girl friend sort of hurried toward



the coatroom and we stood around waiting for our money and I thought, Well, guy, you've come of age or something, for I was hardly the one I'd always been, and then I saw her sort of hurrying toward me with a small smile across the nearly vacant dance floor and she was a little alone in the whole hall when she came up to the band and said Good night to us all, and then Good night to me, with that happy smiling feeling, only the happiness was a melting disguise, only the smile hurt her, and before I had time to wet my lips I jerked the pencil and paper out of my pocket and said, Here, write me something on this, and her fingers were nervous as she wrote her full name and her face wasn't at ease as she wrote her address and it was almost as if she were using her whole afflicted body to get her telephone number down, and before I could even imagine myself doing it I put my hands out and rested my fingers on her bent industrious head and smoothed her hair down from the clear part in the middle as she finished writing.

Her face and neck were alive in a blush as she gave me the pencil and paper and began to move away, with the new paper so young and so meagre between us, and she said, We'll probably never meet again but I was really very happy to know you, and I had no answer except to touch her uncertain arm before she was too far away and then she was hurrying back again over the dark and desolate dance floor to her hidden but waiting friend.

The fellows already had our money and were watching me with old thin smiles and I felt like a mope, trying to look as if I knew what was happening in the world, and I put the completed paper and pencil away and they gave me my money and with the thin superficial glamour of dance-night already long melted we left the dead

hall and rode home in the trolley with some of the windows open and the night cool and girls concealed and the floor of the car unsurmisably dusty and the orchestrations heavy on my lap, my hat heavy and relentlessly awkward on my head, my clothes warm, my coat irksome, and my mind powerlessly mumbling about that girl and how after all she and I had met and in so brief a time after so little watching and listening had—

What had we? I asked, riding in the car and then getting off on the empty morning street and going darkly and alone to my house, going in alone to find the place dead with the others' breathing, then getting my clothes off all except my underwear, and then inert and asleep almost as soon as I felt the stolid bed under me. . . .

#### IV

When I had to go far up into the city this morning on some dull and futile family mission I went sleepily and with no feeling and riding up in the dense subway I saw BOWLING GREEN, I passed it, I saw it and shut my mouth and tried to keep my heart closed and rode on with a shaky feeling of something unreached and uncompleted and suspended, and then I came out at the far station with my body trying desperately to shout at me and the uneasy feeling that it was no use trying to use my brain even for a minute and my eyes looked up at the sign of the street and saw and read, Southern Boulevard. Southern Boulevard, I said, and stopped with my hands dead and let the words out of my mouth again and swallowed them again and wondered and sought when and where I—

Like violent sun and lightning in my brain the full thought shot down on me



—the grown memory and the wrenching feeling and the strange and murderous insight—and I knew with swift and overwhelming powerlessness that Southern Boulevard was nothing in the whole billioned world except the very street on which the girl I had known last night lived—and in that terrible and ungodly moment when I didn't know whether I moved or stayed every splinter of bone in my body mixed with the vengeful blood to rush me back and tear my eyes open—and without wishing it I remembered at once too wildly how I'd stood beside the piano one night at a dance and a girl had come up to me and said, What are you doing here? and with my mind in another direction I'd answered, Waiting for you, and she'd said, No seriously, and I'd said, No seriously, and she'd said, Don't you really know who I am? and I'd looked at her again and at her chin and at her slimness and by God, Ida! I'd said, remembering, and when the fellows came back to play again I was standing there with my arm around her and our faces nearly meeting—

And where was she *now*! I cried as I stood on the dead and fatal street with my flesh full of ancient newness, *where*, and where were all the girls I had loved so utterly and so deeply and loved now with so much more than mere sudden desperation and danger, *where*! I cried thundering on that hostile street with my fists and

my head and my tongue full of bleakness and prayer and inert violence:

Sizeless love was like a new weapon between my lungs and I pulsed powerlessly with all the girls that I had known—insanely as ever they were all in one and she was hugely and inexorably in me and there it lived under the sky, great and fighting in my throat, that relentless and vein-wound and deathless love dammed up in me to exclusion, and there was that soft nameless hush of living, that breathless helplessness and desperation, all the dead days and nights lived redly in me again and all the gone hours and girls were strong and alive against me in a rising and shouting of continuous love, my skin and my mind strained and broke countlessly with the minutes and the girls and the grown sea-surge-moan of love, I stood there on the cement beneath the unbelievable sky with my heart wild and futile as birth and hissing and bursting with an increasing multitude of love as I felt my knees open and my chest fall and my eyes go dead forever—there it lived! like an old machine thundering it cleanly into me, that powerful submission and fearlessness, that immense and narrow absence of warmth that was peaceful and murderous and overwhelming and without end or form—the roof of my mouth nearly began to pain me—

It was as if huge soundless whips were crashing endlessly on my panting head in the thick lair of love!

# AMBROSE BIERCE AT HOME

BY HELEN BIERCE

A WARRIOR who slept in his armor and never furled his banner—that is the way many men think of my father. He was a warrior, I know it, but I suppose every warrior has a home-life, and it is there in our home that I always like to picture him. I knew of his battles, of course—I even sallied forth on some of his minor skirmishes with him—but the warring side of him did not impress me much.

He was a home-loving man, fonder of his own hearthside than of anything else in the world. One of my earliest recollections is of his collection of pine-cones, marvellous to a child. On his library shelves there were rows and rows of them, gathered from all over Northern California. When I was good I was invited in to help make the pine-needle pillows he gave to his friends. Sometimes I was also taken on jaunts into the woods to look for Indian arrow-heads. It was not until after many years that I realized that he had one of the best collections of arrow-heads in the West. What became of them I do not know; possibly they are now lying in some museum marked Collector Unknown.

We were living near San Francisco then, and arrow-heads were not difficult to find. My father had chanced upon most of his himself, but a few were bought from boys of the neighborhood, or from fishermen or hunters, and some were given him by friends. Jake Tunstead, the

sheriff of Marin county, was one of his friends who was always bringing them in.

Those were heroic times in the Far West and the sheriff's business was the shooting of bad men; but now and then, on off-days, when no saloons were being shot to pieces or Chinamen strung up by bandits, he would go out and gather up a few of "them danged things fer the Major." He was in the habit of sticking his head in at one or another of our windows at the most unexpected moments and bawling, "Hey, Major, lookit what I gotcha!", or "Hey, Major, let's go huntin'."

He bawled out such a suggestion for a hunt one afternoon when my mother was giving a tea and when she answered him timidly that Father was not at home, he swung his leg over the sill and climbed into the room. Then he saw the tea-party and was properly flabbergasted. But he was a public officer and must carry on, so he fumbled around and got his hat off, fell over a foot-stool and remarked in a voice that sounded like thunder in the High Sierras that it was a warm day. He weakened and gave it up when Mother handed him an egg-shell teacup that was not as large as the badge pinned to his suspenders; in a frantic rush he escaped to the great outdoors, to wait for my father.

Most of the writers who came to San Francisco visited us at our home, whether

in San Mateo or Santa Cruz. Mark Twain was there often, and I used to think as a little girl that he even slept with his pipe in his mouth, but he was kindly and told us stories, so I was sorry when he went away. Bret Harte, for some reason I don't know, never came out to the house, but I met him and Jack London several times when I went into town to lunch with Father. And when I was very small I thought that Joaquin Miller and George Sterling were members of the family, for they were always at the house. Looking backward, I can understand how my father could have admired these men and their work, but his friendship for Robert Louis Stevenson has ever been a mystery to me.

I don't know just when they met, but it was before Stevenson's marriage to Mrs. Osbourne. When my father met her, some time after the wedding, he came away radiant with new-born hopes for his friend. He told us that if anyone could make Rob take care of himself and get over that terrible cough it would be this lovely and capable wife.

But Stevenson had another one of his periodical breakdowns shortly after his marriage and his wife and her son took him out into the wilderness. They rented an old wreck of a cabin at the famous Silverado mining-camp, not far from Mount Saint Helena, and there Father saw them a great deal, for he was also in retreat at the time in those mountains, trying to subdue an attack of asthma. When the family went back to Europe he corresponded with them regularly, and he joined them in Samoa for several weeks' visit not long before Stevenson's death.

It has always seemed strange to me that my father, whose pen was the most caustic, the most dreaded and feared of his

day, should have formed such a genuine attachment for this weaver of beautiful fantasies. Father, to be sure, also wove a few fantasies himself (his poems, short stories, and such), but his fame was made as a fire-eater—was founded upon his newspaper columns of comment on the world of affairs, and he had no room there for the fanciful.

## II

Our home was broken up by one tragedy after another. My brother Day went up the State to Chico to edit a paper and we had hardly grown accustomed to sitting down to dinner without him when the news arrived of his death. W. R. Hearst, Ed Kaufman and Father left at once for Chico, and Mr. Hearst told me the story afterward, for Father never wanted to talk about it.

It seems that the poor boy—he was only seventeen—had been having his first love-affair and that when he learned the girl was only laughing at him and was planning to marry a man twenty years older he lost his head. He challenged his rival to a gun duel and they were both killed. Father listened grimly, standing alongside the body of his boy. He stared at it silently for a moment, and then said softly, "Well done, my son. You did as I would have had you do!" That closed the episode for Father. He never spoke of it again.

After this came his greatest tragedy—his misunderstanding with my mother. His adoration of her had been wonderful. She was exactly his ideal of a wife; she was gentle, good and beautiful. I worshipped her too, and so did my brothers—and so did another man. This much-discussed affair has never been given right treatment, for Father would not talk of it, of course, and his biographers have

written sentimentally of his "unhappy, short marriage," and all that sort of thing. I believe that, without injustice to anyone, I can tell what really happened.

According to the stories, mother turned an unheeding ear to the words of her admirer, and he wooed her in vain with ardent love-letters, one of which Father found, and being unable to forgive her for merely receiving it, left her forever. But that is only a half-truth. Mother was really rather charmed by this stranger, a wealthy and famous Dane. It was a decorous and discreet fascination, but—she had certainly not sent him back to Denmark up to the time Father found the letter.

Father was her ideal to her dying day (she told me so), but—he wrote all night and slept half the day; he brooded alone by himself most of the time, sitting motionless and wordless by the library fire; he took long walks in the woods making friends with the birds, learning to imitate their calls, and becoming so intimate with them that they gathered in clouds upon his outstretched arms and his head.

I believe it was his lack of understanding, of sympathy, of appreciation for women that caused the trouble. He was the soul of sincerity in all he wrote, but I feel somehow that with women it was different. He expected too little of them mentally. He had the ancients' view of them as chattels, demanding of them fidelity and service, but it never occurred to him to *think* with them.

Perhaps "never" is too strong a word, for there were a few women whom he considered clever—George Eliot, for instance. He attended her famous salons when he lived in London, and years later he told me that although in person she was anything but fascinating, one forgot this the moment she began to talk. He said that no woman could talk with

greater charm than she. And then there was Gertrude Atherton: he thought her one of the greatest women of her time and used to marvel at the lucidity of her thinking. But he accounted for her talent by saying she had a masculine way of marshalling her ideas! She was an intimate friend, and very beautiful.

Nor must I forget the Empress Eugénie, whom he took to be extremely clever as well as charmingly feminine. During his long talks with her while they were planning the *Lantern*, that magazine of his whose two issues vanquished her enemy, Henri Rochefort, her thoughts were as keen as sword-blades and true to the point every time, he said. When Rochefort gave up his persecution of her and fled to Belgium she expressed her appreciation of my father's championship in one of the prettiest speeches he had ever heard. She also presented him with a carved ivory card-case for himself and a most exquisite carved ivory cross for Mother. The cross and case are still among my treasures, but I have forgotten her words.

Withal, his sense of his lofty superiority to women, his reluctance to attempt in any way to stir up in them what he considered would be puerile, infantile glimmerings of thought, led him into a well-guarded courtesy toward them which flattered most of them. He made no effort to understand them. Feminine mental gyrations, he seemed to think, were not worth his mettle; he had men to fight.

Sometimes I have wondered if perhaps when he was studying so diligently during his twenties and about the time he was starting out on his newspaper career, he did not absorb too much of Plato's *Republic*. It has rather pleased me to account thus for some of his furious rebellion against the world in which he found himself living, and to imagine the in-

fluence of that book behind his eternal cry for an immaculate civilization. He always seemed Roman to me, not only in his military carriage, but in his outlook upon everything, even women.

Mother, though, to return to her, filled the needs of his hours of relaxation. It never occurred to her to study with him; she was too sweet and pretty. It was well, perhaps, for he would not have known what to do if she had intruded upon his studies. He only wanted her to see that the cook made him some coffee before she went to bed and left it where it would still be hot when he came out of his library any time before dawn, looking for it.

He wanted her also to keep the house and the babies clean. He could forgive us anything but a dirty face. I would rather have stood before him after telling a great whopper (Heaven knows, he tried hard enough to make us truthful!) than with the evidence of a hoop-rolling expedition around the block still upon my hands.

There was a big scene when he found the Dane's letter and after that he packed his things and left, never to return. Mother was broken-hearted. She did not see the other man again, and she swore to me that it had not been a real romance, but Father would not listen—it was enough that she had permitted some love-letters to be written to her.

Some years later, when we realized he was never going to forgive her, I begged her to get a divorce and marry that man or some other one—both my brothers were dead now and she was so pathetic in her loneliness—but she only shook her head sadly and told me she could not love anyone but my father. The Dane lived to be an old man but did not marry. He and I corresponded through all the years and until long after Mother's death.

It was the same story with my father. I was living with him in Washington in the 90's when he was working for Mr. Hearst's papers, and one day I asked him why he did not marry again. I knew he walked up and down the streets after dark, looking longingly at the lighted windows of the houses, especially those where he heard the voices of children.

Someone previous to this had whispered to Mother that he wanted a divorce so he might be free to remarry and she, the dutiful, proud wife, immediately got one. But he had not married and I could see no signs that he was interested in any one, so I asked him. He looked at me solemnly and then answered quietly, "Bibs, there is only one woman I have ever loved and that woman is your mother!" Then he walked off and left me. The subject was closed and I did not bring it up again.

I was his hostess in those days and we did a great deal of entertaining. He was a good host and his friends were as staunch and true as his enemies. Somewhere, somehow he had learned to cook and had several *récipés* he had invented; he wrote them out for his friends and some of them were well-known in Washington.

His chafing-dish suppers, especially his Welsh-rarebit suppers, were famous, and as he naturally did not wake up until about midnight, they were given after the theatre or some other party. If he had no copy to get out at once his guests might not leave before dawn. He drank a great deal, but the tales of his drunkenness were exaggerations. I never saw him drunk. He was too fastidious for anything so uncouth as that.

If he had any romances during this time or at any time after he left my mother, I did not know of them. There is an artist

in San Francisco who tells me he spent years on his knees in her studio—perhaps so, I do not know. But I do know that a score of women proposed to him. Some of them were wealthy and apparently thought he would be unable to resist, but he seems to have managed to do so.

His enemies circulated the story that he was having an affair with his secretary, but I knew that dear woman—we all lived in the same house together for years in Washington—and I knew there was no romance there—at least not on his part. She was an extremely plain little person whom he had taken from a dull small town in California, educated, and made his secretary. Naturally enough, she took him for one of the gods. She devoted her life to him, and both Mother and I thought a great deal of her. She was the soul of honor. After his disappearance in Mexico, she took care of his papers and although she soon sent everything on to me to the Middle West, where I was then living, she never gave up hope for his return.

The following poem I found among his papers and it has not been published before. It is written in his beautiful upright handwriting on a piece of letter-paper and it is signed.

How blind is he who, powerless to discern  
The glories that about his pathway burn,  
Walks unaware the avenues of Dream  
Nor sees the domes of Paradise agleam!  
O Golden Age, to him more nobly planned  
Thy light lies ever upon sea and land  
From sordid scenes he lifts his eyes at will  
And sees a Grecian god on every hill.

### III

When Father was planning his Mexican trip in 1913 we had some long talks about it; about what he thought of the Mexicans

as fighters; about what kind of man Villa really was; about Mexican silver (he was always interested in that subject, for he owned and had worked a California silver mine); and about what he would do when he came back. He was seventy then, but he had never felt better except for feeling tired and in need of a change. His asthma, from which he had suffered most of his life, was giving him a respite at last. He hated the thought of oncoming age—I knew that as all his friends knew it—but I know he intended coming home again. His enemies say he never expected to come back and probably even committed suicide. I am positive that this was not the case. He believed, to be sure, that every man had a sovereign right to do as he pleased in that matter, but he would not have done it—he played the game too well.

On the last evening before he left we talked of a manuscript he was finishing. It was the biography of a fellow newspaper man. He explained that it was almost done and that he intended putting the last touches to it in San Antonio before he went over into Juarez, where Villa was camping with his forces. He outlined it briefly to me and was enthusiastic over it, saying that it was something different in biographies and would make a stir.

He wrote me then from San Antonio and Larado and said his manuscript was finished and that he was leaving at once to see what the Mexicans were scrapping over, and he was going to write his impressions of the row for the press. He said I would hear from him as regularly as he could get letters out of the country. He asked me not to be anxious about him.

From Juarez came another line shortly after he had crossed the border. In that last letter he told me about a trunk, with the manuscript in it, that he had left at



a hotel in Larado to await his return. He mentioned some fighting that he had witnessed and described the Mexicans as the worst shots in the world. He was never heard of again. Shortly after that his trunk disappeared, too, and was never heard of again.

Thousands of reports concerning his end have come to me, but the one I believe is that of Villa shooting Father himself because he was leaving the Villa camp for the Carranza camp to see how things were going on the other side. The bandit feared he might talk; also rumors had floated in of a belt filled with gold that this gringo was wearing. Fear of talk—love of gold—it was so simple for Señor Villa.

It is twenty years now since Father's last letter came from Juarez, but I am still receiving mail from all over the world

from people who say they know the true story of his death. Some of these are from excited mediums whose information is communicated from the spirit world, and I have also received others from persons who say they could be persuaded to give me the real facts for the trifle of \$5000.

Secret Service investigations, Army inquiries, Pinkerton searches, and others carried on by the newspapers were all as thorough as could be, but they yielded nothing. I searched myself for two years, until I was confident that Father had left this world and gone the way he wanted to go. Soldiering in the Civil War, he had seen many shattered bodies, and could never rid himself of the horror of them. When his hour struck he wanted to go quickly and with none of his friends near to look upon his face afterward. That was given him.

# RATS AND GHOSTS

BY IDWAL JONES

A SQUARE of planks on which lizards are slumbering in the Winter sun; a brick furnace, gone to earth and grown over by holly and manzanita—these are the sole relics of the old Ventura mine. As ages go in California, it is venerable. Governor Pio Pico, with sword and red-lined mantua, followed by a retinue on caparisoned mules, once toiled up this slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains to pay respect to the diggings that even in the hey-day of the opulent Colonial régime were notable.

Then there was the little Padre Juan de Neve, the Fratre Minore, so pathologically inquisitive about mines that he went down all he came across. I wish he had bequeathed a record of his visit. He wrote a chronicle of his underground prowlings, it is true, but it was left in MSS. and got lost on his perilous return to Mexico. He was a grand describer, and had the macabre touch.

Forty years ago José de Olivares, a Madrid journalist, came to inspect these workings, and wrote an account replete with weird details. The Ventura was going strong then. The Castilian usages still prevailed, and he found them also in the neighboring quicksilver mines of Idria, Guadalupe and New Almaden. Every shaft, drift and chamber in the system had a Spanish name, and there was still a shrine at which the *trabajadores* in velvet jackets, their faces and hands reddened with cinnabar, made their devo-

tions to Our Lady before touching pick and shovel.

Those of them that were miners—a grade above shovellers—had been brought over from the Almaden in La Mancha, the greatest mine in Spain. The Almaden rose to its apogee in the Middle Ages, when the Fuggers of Augsburg worked it, selling immense quantities of mercury to “alchymists, physicians and Turks,” and it still flourishes. The worn and decrepit *trabajadores*, sans teeth and hair, mumbling and piteously salivated, had roamed La Mancha since the time of Pliny, begging alms, their cloaked faces scaring children half to death. You can well believe that the old Almaden had a fine accretion of legends.

Of the mercury mines in California, the New Almaden, over on the next ridge, is the most renowned. It has been closed for at least fifteen years. There is no war now, with its demand for mercury fulminate, and the China trade is in the doldrums. How many flasks of quicksilver were sent in the old days from this ridge to the Street of the Pigments in Canton is beyond all reckoning. Half a million at least. Where else was such vermilion made, fit to lay on the balconies of Hangchow and the magisterial chests of Peking? The real vermilion must be scarce now, but of fake vermilion (red lead and ferric oxide) there is far too much.

The director's *casa* at the mine—a balustraded adobe, with a belvedere and a

coach-house large enough for twenty carriages—now has a neglected and sad air, as if lamenting its past elegance, the duennas in mantillas, and the swans lost from the pond. The aspens have been cut down for firewood. *Les lauriers sont coupés*. A cricket has the dusty patio all to itself.

It must often be a sorrow to mining engineers that their masterpieces should remain hidden from the eye of man. What is a mine but a sunken edifice? Conceive of one, a century a-building, twice as high as the tallest skyscraper in Manhattan, with the Louvre, the Giralda and a dozen of the larger basilicas of the world encircling its base, their gloomy corridors, silent, dripping, inhabited by owls, bats, snakes, rats and, let us assume, apparitions, ghosts more pallid than ordinary: the whole overlaid by smoothed-over earth. Perhaps it is just as well that the New Almaden is hidden. With its Avernian-Romanesque-Gothic-Cellular architecture, it would be too oppressive to look at: a monstrosity hiving legends and spook-yarns dreadful beyond the fustian dreadfulness of Hugo.

Yet outside of the lost MSS. of Padre Juan, perhaps no really formidable work on the superstitions of mines has ever been compiled. On all who write about mining—except to peddle stock—realism lays its chilling hand. Mr. Cabell, by vocation a student of coal measures, has set no fantasy below the grass roots, and in his realm of Poictesme there are no mines.

The Western *trabajadores* have all but vanished, but a few tales remain that have a special flavor. Angel Moreno, the last *capitan* of a mine back of Santa Cruz, cherished in his adobe office a rack of twenty maps done by a Mexican draftsman almost ninety years ago; they were kept on a rack, like votive candles. A burly

old fellow, with the broad shoulders of a hard-rock miner, and a vermilion face, he was of a truculent disposition, and had to be coaxed before he would show his treasures.

"Maps? Well, of what tunnel? There's fifty miles of tunnel here."

But he would always unwind one, flattening it out on the table with a crackling like pistol shots. It was done by an artist in love with his materials. The colors were sunk like fresco tints into the oily parchment, which was illuminated with Aeolus heads, kobolds, gnomes, unicorns and other beasts.

"Now"—jamming down a thumb—"there's a pretty good place to start. The Don Luis Blanco Chamber—the finest of them all."

## II

Don Luis became the *capitan* soon after the last Viceroy had departed from Mexico. Born in La Mancha, he early displayed genius as a *rebuscador*—a smeller-out of rare metals. As a mine superintendent he was even more successful. He was stern; he was energetic and unsentimental; he was cast in the Torquemada mold.

He took a pride in his chamber. He put his whole heart into the digging of it, and later his whole body. Indians worked for him in those days, and he drove them as if they were convicts. Every morning he strode down the gallery, wearing a peaked beaver hat and cracking a bull-hide whip. It was a bad day for someone if that hat touched ever so lightly the roof, for that meant a sagging and a botched job with the timbers. His bull-hide could snag flesh from a man at ten paces. His aspect, too, as he swaggered along, preceded by his shaking lantern-bearer, must have been

disheartening, for quicksilver had done strange things to him, and his jaw and mouth were bound up in flannel.

Don Luis fell out with one Ermengildo, a blaster, who wandered from mine to mine with a phial of nitro-glycerine (Sobrero's invention in 1846) in his vest, performing blasts at a hundred-peso fee—small enough, considering the risk in those primitive days. A more tactful, or less pig-headed, man would have chosen someone else to quarrel with in a wine-shop. The aggrieved *nitrista* shook some drops of the explosive into his own drink, and then dashed it down. Exactly what happened then, nobody knew; but Don Luis had to be dug out from under a ton of wreckage.

Thereafter he would use only blasting-powder, the old rack-a-rock. It was uncertain stuff; and one day, after some windy shots, he lost his temper.

"Fetch me some charcoal!" he yelled. "Sulphur and a keg of that Chili salt-peter! I'll show you how to make powder with force in it, *amigos! Polver con fuerza!*"

They fetched him the ingredients on the run, then fled to the portal, at a safe distance, and shook as they watched him. Don Luis stirred it himself in the mixing-box, with the lantern at his feet. Suddenly the flame expanded like a tree, the chamber filled with a blue light, and Don Luis vanished as completely as if he had never lived. The uproar was terrific, and the *trabajadores* were blown flat, to lie like dead men, unable to breathe in the vacuum. As the air sucked out, rats flocked from the adit, squeaking, and pirouetting over their faces and chests like ballet-dancers.

Don Luis was sprayed all over the roof. All of him that came down was a handful of brass buttons. The mine could not

let a man like that go without a proper farewell. So Fray Ignacio held a mass in the crypt, lighted up by flares that shone on the moist walls, blood-red with cinabar. The *trabajadores*, in their best velvet jackets, kneeled in rows and chanted the responses. Very sweet and tremulous was the music, played on a portable harmonium. The echoes given back from the roof were in an unearthly, hollow key, not unlike the voice of Don Luis himself, who had given the mine the undivided empire of his affection.

The mass was repeated a year to the day. But the chamber with its rich and wide gangue was by then abandoned. Rather than ply a shovel in this tomb the miners preferred not to work at all. Angel Moreno believes it is still haunted. A ghost may yet be seen weaving in and about the timbers, as if trying to find egress. One explanation is that the timbers, covered with monstrous fungi and bundles of fibre, are far gone in decay, and emanate floating, luminous stuff, like corpse-candles or will-o'-the-wisps.

To ordinary physical terror the workers appear to have been immune. Mining was their craft: sweating, hard work it was; and they put up with the evils they could not avoid. Fatigue for one, since rich mercurial ore is three times as heavy as lead; and again the dangers of inhaling the fumes, which are almost always present, since the mineral is volatile at any temperature above 40° Centigrade. Its absorption throws the body into a harrowing plight, with salivation and acute rheumatic pains.

The subtlety with which mercurial vapor penetrates solids is astonishing. Every few years the reducing plant at New Almaden was destroyed to salvage the escaped metal embedded in the wood and bricks. Tons of it permeated the earth

beneath to the depth of thirty-five feet. Considering all these dangers, the pay was small—at the time of De Olivares' visit, \$10 a week—but the shifts, when the ore was rich, were only three or four hours long. When the nearby gold mines began to deepen and there was a demand for skill beyond that of the mere surface digger, the *trabajadores* drifted to areas where the air was less maleficent and the wages higher.

One of them, Pedro Vargas, wandered off with a cousin and found work at a gold mine in the Tuolumne foothills. On the eve of a holiday, he set off a blast just as the last shift was departing. It knocked open a pocket of pure bullion, with nuggets that dragged away on the ends of filigree threads; but as a lot of heavy rocks would have to be cleared off before it could be removed the foreman ordered a Basque to sit on the ore and watch it, and to stay there alone over the holiday.

Late the next night Pedro and his cousin, who had hatched a plan to "high-grade" that ore and carry it off in their boots, went stealthily into the drift. But there was the trustworthy Basque, sitting there stolid and upright. Pedro began to talk in an effort to become friendly with him. He told him jokes, flattered him, then sang ballads in an alluring voice—mimicking a Chilean girl at the fandango, for whom, so the gossip went, the Basque had bought a piece of fur.

Unmoved, the Basque gazed downward, at the piece of bread in his hand. A rat hopped on his knee and squeaked. For several minutes it was sing Pedro, squeak rat, sing Pedro—but then Pedro stopped short, uncomfortable. The silence of that Basque, sitting there mumchance, what else could it portend but that he would reveal to the foreman that the *mercuro* was a thief?

The rat leaped on the Basque's shoulder, and slowly the man tipped backward, with bent legs in the air. The visitors laughed in relief. The watchmen had been lifeless for at least twelve hours. A mishap not uncommon to Spanish miners had befallen him. Sitting down with an unguarded knife in his belt, the point had thrust itself into the femoral artery, and in the deep languor that came over him he had bled white.

The next morning the "jewelry shop" was empty, and Pedro and his cousin were far down the road with loaded panniers, on the way back to the *posada* and the wine-shops in San Benito county.

### III

That episode reminds me that I have a dislike of rats, an aversion so deep-rooted that I have never been able to overcome it. Beetles and bats I used to dissect when I was absorbed, for a while, in comparative anatomy, but never a rat, not even its remote cousin, the leaf-eared woodmouse. A rat always brings to my mind anthrophagus tales, yarns of the charnel-house, of Bishop Hatto, and incidents more repellent, though I am aware that the dislike is irrational and only a personal idiosyncrasy. I have never known it to exist in a miner.

The rat is in general harmless, and often useful. In the first place it is a scavenger. The humid subterranean air tends to a speedy decay of organic matter. A piece of meat no larger than one's thumb will fill a drift with a dreadful odor of putrescence. A dead rat—unless it has hungry neighbors close by—is sent on top at once.

Once I was in a mine in company with the caretaker, a bowed, silent Corsican. He was an admirable type; a master of

his environment, with eyes that functioned in the half-light, and ears quick to detect any note significant among the myriad noises perceptible only to those, like himself, conditioned to mole life. It was his task to keep the timbering in repair, and seeing a post that leaned over, he set to work with hammer and shims, while I sat a considerable way off, waiting for him.

Then I saw that I was under guard. Sitting on a ledge, and eyeing me with mingled distrust and anticipation, was a very large rat, a patriarch with gray whiskers. His head was cocked. He hoped I would turn out to be a miner, open a pail and fling him a crust. With eyes still on me, he tucked his paws under his chin, and decided to be patient for an hour or so. Just then the Corsican gave a shout, and the beast went off in his direction at a bounding trot.

An old friend, the Corsican said. He had known Umberto a long time; three years at least. Umberto was the grandfather of rats in that tunnel, and an extraordinarily wise fellow, too. When danger was impending he displayed concern at once and scuttled away as far as he could.

Was it not possible, I asked, to attribute overmuch wisdom to the beggar? Were there not many sounds audible only to the lower animals? The Corsican inclined to agree. So we worked it out that the agitation of the rat was due to alarm at sounds low in the scale of audibility: the snapping of wood fiber, the drop of a fleck of shale, the trickling of dust from holes bored by the amblycid weevil, the click of the termite's jaws.

Much of the tolerance of miners for rats rests on a belief in this alertness of the beasts in a milieu where alertness is a quality that ranks high. Also, there is

their aforesaid hygienic use. One mine boss I knew was always dreadfully upset whenever he came across a dead rat. It betokened—unless the creature had been fighting or had got run over by a truck—some malign influence at large in the galleries—fire-damp, a bad vapor, or poisoned water.

But the intelligence of the rat, as Joseph Conrad used to say, is often exaggerated, like that of men. At times it can display downright idiocy. I was returning alone from the sump of a copper mine, with a candle, when I heard a drumming sound. I flattened myself against the wall, and a legion of rats swept past, urgently, too preoccupied to utter a squeak. It was a wholesale decampment. What else could it portend short of a flood or a cave-in? I expected to hear an appalling crash in the older workings. But nothing happened. In five minutes the whole troupe swept past again, with the same deadly earnestness, but in the opposite direction.

My Corsican made the interesting remark that when a rat drops a thousand feet, it explodes—and with a culminating bang, as if it were an egg. If a miner happened to be standing underneath, his crown would sustain some damage. But far more luckless would he be if a dog landed upon him. Dogs are thus anathema in the workings. Three men in the old Ophir mine had their necks broken when one that had been accumulating impetus for a third of a mile down the shaft fell upon them as they were getting out of the cage.

But if the dog is heartily disliked below as a nuisance and a danger, or the slayer of somebody's pet rat, the larger quadrupeds share none of this disfavor. The horse, mules and burros that haul cars in the flashy corridors are devoid of curiosity and make no silly displays of energy.



They are meek and plodding fellow-creatures in the dark Avernian world, no surer of tomorrow than their masters, more demonstrative of affection than their kind above, and much more grateful for a lump of sugar or an old straw hat to munch.

An ancient custom still prevails in Grass Valley and one or two other camps in mid-California, and one humane old gentleman, an engineer who retired East last Winter, made it an annual ceremony for fifty years. On Christmas morning, while it was still dark, he had the horses fetched up and escorted to a meadow, to eat baskets of apples and await the slow coming of the light.

After breakfast, people came over to see them. Old miners, past toil, hobbled along with their sticks, to rub their velvety noses and talk about the horses they knew when they were lads. The younger animals capered, rolled on their backs and brandished their hooves at the sky. The oldsters reared now and then, excited with the rush of old memories, then settled down to crop all the grass they could before it vanished.

It was a fresh and innocent spectacle, and evocative of tender sentiments, like the performance of an age-old, primitive rite. Just before noon the engineer would appear: a benevolent man in gray, with a thrust of white beard; and dangling a pince-nez, he would speak this piece:

"Sirs, it is fitting here to make a few remarks. These horses have long been pent up in darkness. They have perceived with astonishment the coming of the dawn. They exult now in the world of sunlight; with the green carpet so happily edible; the twitter of birds, the dewy globes of the mushroom, the strewing of the early blue lupin, and the golden escholtzia. These are all marvellous things. I am not sure that any of us would wish even for

a moment to be one of these horses. But we can share with them their delight and happiness. Sirs, the best wishes of the season to you all."

A Christian ritual? Hardly Cornish, for that race is unsentimental toward birds and animals: perhaps Etrurian, for Pliny speaks of the *ascensus asinorum* from mines, so that the quadrupeds might partake in the divine rites, a relic no doubt of the religion of Numa.

In the observance of such old customs seems to flower the hope that the existing order of things may continue, without a break, even between today and tomorrow. For example, the routine act of leaving at the end of a shift a pile of already loosened ore—*la buena mañana* or "the morning glory"—for those coming after to take up, with as small a break in continuance as possible, lest mischance intervene.

#### IV

An omen once widely feared in mines, as well as at sea, is the ringing of a glass. In the cobwebby hoist-room of a mine on the Amador Lode the tender, an octogenarian with a fall of Mosaic whisker on his chest, sat on a stool with his eyes glued on the dial in front of him, its finger registering stops in the Vesuvius-deep shaft.

Men were riding up in the skip, which was loaded with ore. He had become an automaton, the beating of his heart synchronous with the stroke of the piston; his ears sharpened to all the bells, the wheezings of steam, and the tones of the in-paying cable. His small granddaughter came in with a basket and began laying out his luncheon. She struck the glass accidentally. The old man whirled about to jam his cap upon the glass.

After the load was up, he berated us for our stupidity.

"Didn't you know any better than for to let a glass ring—hey? Suppose a man had fallen out!"

Last Summer I was aboard an ore freighter in the Gulf of California, and while we were about the cabin table the steward happened to knock a tumbler against the claret bottle. Both the master and the first officer put out their hands to still it.

They did it impulsively, and neither spoke a word for a moment. Then the first officer, who had lost a bark in the *Pau-motos* and a shipmate in the shark-infested water of Acapulco, said it was a harbinger that filled him with dread. He had always believed in it, and so had his father before him, but he did not know its origin. Perhaps it goes back to medieval times, when the *sonnetto del morto* was quite commonly heard.

The tale of another manifestation was told me by an elderly Spaniard in the Sierra foothills. José María Fernandez was the caretaker of a mine that had shut down after an accident. The roof of an old workings collapsed. After a slight tremor the mountain settled down to rest in quiet for another thousand years, and ten men were sealed up in it forever.

José had witnessed too many fatal episodes to be unnerved by this one. He had nerves as tough as piano-wire, and was, moreover, of a phlegmatic and cheerful temperament. Once he slipped down a shaft, but a spike caught his trouser-leg, and he hung impaled over the black void for two hours. A man with imagination, in telling of this episode, would have given it a little art to enhance its horror. José remarked simply that he had felt damned uncomfortable, and had to be careful while squirming up on himself, "like a worm on a hook," else the remaining threads of the hem break. He escaped without any

help, and felt right enough after a drink of coffee.

A month after the catastrophe of the falling roof, José was patrolling far below, in a tunnel fairly close to the shaft. He was alone, smoking, enjoying the coolness and the solitude. By nature a solitary, he was enamoured of the tomb-like stillness of the tunnels, every foot of them familiar to him; the shadows and the gleam of his lantern on the pools, and the pillars, bent and hung with gray moss, like hoary caryatides.

Suddenly, he heard steps. He turned, holding up his lantern, but no one was in sight. The sounds were unmistakable, those of a person running, stumbling, plashing through water, and now and then slackening from fatigue. José hid behind a pillar, with scalp tightening. After a few minutes of silence, the footfalls recommenced.

Fright was in his blood for the first time in his life, and he fled, racing toward the shaft. He mounted fast, and climbed ten fathoms of ladder before he stopped. Whatever the thing was, he had outwitted it, and hidden away here in the blackness he was quite safe from discovery. He refilled his pipe, but before he could strike the match, the footfalls again began.

Rung by rung, they ascended, with the rasp of hob-nailed boots. He shut his eyes, trembling; the steps ceased; then they sounded on the rungs above him, and died out at the shaft opening.

Greatly agitated, José went to his cabin, a quarter of a mile away in some pine woods. He groped for the lamp, and lighted it. Here another prodigy occurred. His terrier, a plucky and devoted little animal, leaned against the wall at sight of him, with every hackle erect, fangs bared, and waving its paw as if to fend off an evil.

"Come here, Perro!" he shouted.

Howling dismally, the dog scuttled through the door. José slumped into his chair, overcome, as he said, "with the shakes." The dog made a furtive return a week later, digging up the bones hidden in the yard and gnawing them all before it dared reënter the cabin, its tail between its legs.

José knew himself to be blameless in the affair of the falling roof, but some ghost

had escaped from the sealed tomb to pursue him, the scapegoat, with its vengeance. And this ghost was clearly visible to the dog.

Something within José snapped in the extremity of fear. He retired to his small ranch, and in the phantom-dispelling sun that warms his back and ripens his fruit, he has rediscovered an old pleasure. That he will ever again go down into any mine is less than probable.

# THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

## Meteorology

### SHOWERS OF THIS AND THAT

By CHARLES FITZHUGH TALMAN

A GREAT deal of unnecessary mystery has been made of the occasional falls from the sky of miscellaneous matter, living and non-living, in which our superstitious ancestors saw prodigies and portents, and in which our modern newsmen see opportunities for filling a first-page box in the *Daily Hodgepodge*. Tales of such events were part of the stock-in-trade of a recently deceased literary eccentric, whose forte consisted of scoffing at common-sense explanations of curious natural phenomena.

Leaving out of consideration falls of meteorites, volcanic ejecta and disabled winged creatures, all genuine episodes of this sort owe their occurrence to the lifting and transporting powers of the wind. If they seem strange, it is because few people realize the forces attained, at times, by ascending air currents. Not only are local atmospheric vortices, including tornadoes, waterspouts and dust whirls, capable of carrying heavy objects aloft, but the upward currents of much more extensive thunderstorms and squalls are often extremely violent. Not long ago an air-mail pilot was caught in the updraft of a thunder-squall. With his plane headed straight down and the motor going full-speed, he was yet carried rapidly to the top of the storm cloud.

Once high in the air, objects may make long journeys before returning to the ground. Dust and other light material is

sometimes transported thousands of miles. How far heavier objects may be carried is indicated by the experiences of the Germans who have lately developed the sport of "thunderstorm soaring" in the Rhön Mountains. Taking off in their motorless planes at the front of a thunderstorm, they are tossed up to a height of a mile or more, whence they glide scores of miles across country. One of them, in 1931, covered a horizontal distance of 137 miles.

A conspicuous "shower" of any substance implies its fall in large quantities in a particular locality. This may happen because the winds blow in such a way that a mass of material lifted at one place is not much scattered before it falls, or its concentration may even be increased by converging air currents. Enormous amounts of pollen blown up at one time from pine trees are often thus deposited at places so far away that the source of the material is not recognized by observers. The town of Lund, in Sweden, was once heavily showered with pine pollen from a forest thirty-five miles distant. In many cases the material falls with rain and its concentration is due in part to the slope of the land. It drains with the rain water into hollows, where it accumulates in such abundance as to attract attention.

For the reasons just stated, many queer things do occasionally fall from the sky. But, as Buttercup remarks, things are not always what they seem. The falling objects and materials are often misidentified. Pollen is usually mistaken for sulphur. Rain blackened with soot is sometimes re-

ported as ink. Whitened with chalky soil, it becomes milk. Reddened with desert dust, it has been so generally identified as blood through the ages that this mixture, falls of which are frequent in some parts of the world, is often conventionally described as blood rain (*pluie de sang; Blut-regen*) in scientific literature.

In still other cases things found on the ground and supposed to have fallen from the clouds have actually come from sources on or near the earth. Lastly, some stories of seemingly miraculous showers are pure fabrications, and many have doubtless been much embellished by the narrators.

The biblical narrative of a shower of quail (Numbers xi, 31) records no miracle. During the night of September 24-25, 1930, a thunderstorm, accompanied by heavy rain, occurred at the Black Sea port of Burgas, Bulgaria. A great flock of partridges was caught in the storm and quantities of the birds fell exhausted in the streets, where they were easily caught. Roast partridge was the prevailing dish all over the town the following day. During the prevalence of a tropical storm in 1896 hundreds of dead birds of several species fell in the streets of Baton Rouge, La.

Showers of fish have received special attention from Dr. E. W. Gudger of the American Museum of Natural History, who has collected upwards of seventy more or less well authenticated accounts of such occurrences, ranging in time from the early centuries of the Christian era to the present. In most or all cases the fish are said to have fallen with rain, in numbers varying from a few specimens to many thousands. In a large proportion of cases the fish are stated to have been found alive; owing probably to the fact that they fell into pools of water or that their fall was broken by vegetation. Dr. Gudger says on

this point: "All fishermen know that fishes generally succumb slowly to falls and blows, and if the fish fell on grassy lands, the shock would be much decreased."

The explanation of these reported falls is not necessarily the same in all cases, but the process usually involved is doubtless the whirling up and subsequent downfall of a mass of water, with its contents, by a waterspout or a tornado. These violent whirlwinds have been known to drain small ponds, and according to the Danish physicist Oersted a waterspout once laid bare the harbor of Christiansö, on the Baltic. Twice in recent years—viz., near Boca Ciega Bay, Fla., and near Lake Varese, Italy—waterspouts that moved inland deposited many fish when they collapsed.

Most showers of other aquatic creatures can be similarly explained. Several falls of frogs have been recorded, and a few of mollusks, crabs, etc. Showers of land-dwelling creatures have been the subject of many circumstantial reports, some of them recording the personal experiences of trained naturalists, and we can hardly doubt that colonies of small animals are occasionally swept up from dry land by tornadoes or other winds and afterward showered down at least a few miles away from their starting points.

Showers of small toads (about as large as hazelnuts in some cases) have been reported almost as often as showers of fish. An Associated Press despatch of July 21, 1933, told of a case at North Chelmsford, Mass., and the occurrence of such showers on the snowfields of Lapland is mentioned in "The Story of San Michele." A number of cases have been described in detail in the French scientific journals. The toads are usually said to have fallen during heavy rain, sometimes lighting on the hats, umbrellas and clothing of the observers, be-

sides being seen hopping about on the ground, apparently none the worse for their fall.

Toads begin their lives in water, as tadpoles, and after the tadpole stage still prefer damp places on land. Thus in dry weather young toads burrow in the ground or remain under vegetation, but in rainy weather come out into the open. Their appearance in large numbers during or soon after showers doubtless explains many stories of their fall from on high. In the year 1867, according to a description by an eye-witness published in the French journal *Cosmos*, a heavy downpour at the end of the dry season flooded the substructure of a military hospital at Saigon, Indo-China. No toads had been seen in the neighborhood for months, but as the rain continued these creatures emerged in countless droves from holes in the flooring until the whole building swarmed with them.

The writer of this description remarks that if the toads had emerged somewhere outdoors, their mode of arrival would probably not have been observed and they might thus have been supposed to have come down with the rain. It should be noted, however, that wet weather usually attends tornadoes and thundersqualls; hence young toads must often come forth in multitudes at times when there are winds capable of sweeping them up from the earth, so that a good many genuine showers of these animals probably do occur. Toads falling on hard ground or pavements would probably be killed, but those that fell on leaves, grass and the like, or in rain pools, might survive.

The rapid multiplication of red algae and rotifers in puddles is supposed to account for some reported showers of blood, but the usual explanation of such events is the one already stated. Stories of bloody

rain are related by several classical writers, from the time of Homer onward (two such episodes occur in the *Iliad*), and they figure conspicuously in the medieval chronicles. Gregory of Tours tells of a rain of blood that fell over Paris in the year 582, when "many people had their clothes stained with it and cast them off in terror." On October 30, 1926, Paris and other places in France experienced a similar shower of red rain, but it caused no popular excitement. The non-miraculous character of such showers is now generally recognized even by the peasantry in Southern Europe. The dust by which the rain is reddened is blown in most cases from the Sahara; the same dust being responsible for the remarkable red fogs often encountered by vessels hundreds of miles off the African coast in the Atlantic.

On the pavement beneath the shade trees bordering some city street a passer-by notices what appear to be raindrops in great numbers. No drops are seen except just under the trees and no rain has fallen recently in the neighborhood. Here we have the making of a mystery for the newspapers and one that never seems to lose its novelty, though the explanation has often been published. The drops consist of honeydew, secreted by swarms of plant-lice, scale-insects or leaf-hoppers. This sticky stuff does not evaporate rapidly and therefore remains visible for a long time.

Manna has not ceased to fall, though it does not come down from the skies, and never did. A case reported from Natal, South Africa, in press despatches of April, 1932, may have referred to the edible lichen *Lecanora* (or *Sphaerothallia*) *esculenta*, the winged granules of which are sometimes blown up to considerable heights from desert lands and fall in veritable showers. Some authorities have identified the biblical manna with this lichen, but



*Lecanora* is unknown today in the Sinai peninsula, the scene of the Old Testament story.

On the other hand an edible sugary substance is now found in considerable abundance on the ground in that region. It is sometimes called "tamarisk manna," and it was formerly thought to be an exudation from tamarisk bushes, caused by the punctures of insects. A few years ago, however, an expedition from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem made a careful study of this manna and found that it was not directly exuded by the plants but was a secretion of insects living on them; *i.e.*, a kind of honeydew. The chief manna-producers are two species of scale-insect. Manna is ejected as a clear juice, which falls to the ground in drops. In a favorable state of the atmosphere these harden quickly into white sugar grains of various sizes, which are gathered and eaten by the Bedouins.

Long is the list of things that really fall now and then, to the mystification of observers, from a region lofty enough to be described as the sky. On June 30, 1897, a number of English haymakers saw a quan-

tity of new-mown hay carried upward and out of sight by a small whirlwind. Three miles away people were amazed to witness its fall over houses, trees and bushes, apparently from the clouds. Probably such hay showers are not very rare. One near Monkstown, Ireland, July 29, 1875, is said to have lasted for five minutes over an area of more than a square mile.

During the night of March 8-9, 1930, a singular yellowish brown substance was deposited from the atmosphere over an area of many square miles in the neighborhood of Southport, England. Under the microscope it was found to consist of semi-transparent particles of irregular shape, with adhering particles of soot. The former were identified as algae of a species that grows in mountainous districts. They are supposed to have been brought by the wind from the Peak district of Derbyshire, some fifty miles away, and to have become mixed with soot during their passage through the air.

The heart of New York City was treated to a shower of cattail seeds, simulating a snowstorm, on October 25-26, 1931. The seeds were blown from the Jersey marshes.

## Psychology

### THE MINDS OF CHILDREN

BY GRACE ADAMS

IT is a little surprising, when one stops to think about it, that in this predominantly psychological age we should be so ignorant of the actual workings of the young child's mind. This lack seems the more astounding because of the impressive array of great names which are associated with child study. Out of Europe we have, taking Rousseau to begin with, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Karl Groos, Maria Montessori, Alfred Binet, and from our own country

Stanley Hall and his devoted and industrious followers. All of these wrote large quantities of words, both inspirational and terrifying, about that miraculous phenomenon, the human young, but altogether they have told us precious little about its mental functioning.

The main trouble with this line of child-fanciers from Rousseau to Hall is that they were unfitted for their work by a common and portentous deficiency—their unbounded admiration for the object of their study. They were most of them inveterate nature lovers, and, finding the

average adult a sorry specimen of Nature's heroic plan, they turned to the child for comfort. So instead of casting a cool and disinterested eye upon the brats they found around them, they bestowed upon the "child soul" all the transcendent virtues of both animals and angels.

Madame Montessori did not fall into this romantic error; instead she was almost too practical. Her sole interest in the child lay in its educability. Accordingly, she provided grateful schoolma'ams with a great many ingenious and painless methods for teaching a three-year-old to count, or a five-year-old to read. But she, too, neglected to tell us how these same five- and three-year-olds might think if they were not forever hemmed in by educational blocks and willing tutors.

During the 1890's Binet began to remedy this omission by studying, in the approved laboratory fashion of his day, the "introspections" of his two little daughters. But before his work was well started the Paris schools asked him to devise a method for weeding out their duller pupils. And so the psychological exercises of the two little Binets became the first mental tests.

It is in America that we have seen mental measuring reach its orgiastic zenith. As the testers in their laboratories have constructed their Form-Boards, their Dissected Pictures, and their Action-Agents, and have computed their Quotients and Scales and Indices, the child mind has gradually been lost sight of, until now it exists for the measurers mainly as the arena where the Coefficient of Reliability of one test can be reckoned in terms of another.

All the while, the great systems of adult analytic psychology have been gaining converts outside the laboratory. And whenever a psychological theorist wishes to

bolster up some particularly incredible hypothesis, often having to do with the more vicious forms of erotism, he customarily clinches his argument by saying that such conditions are prevalent in childhood. Since few adults have any but the haziest remembrances of their infantile thinking habits, each new theory thus propounded is accepted as gullibly as all the others it flatly contradicts. Now at last, modern pedagogy, as represented by Progressive Education and abetted not only by the psychologists but by the writers of juvenile literature and all professional child-lovers, has evolved the myth that a child left to its own devices and assiduously shielded from the pernicious influences of adults will, by the time it learns to talk plainly, show all the essential characteristics of artist, philosopher, scientist and savior of humanity.

In marked contrast to this romantic history of child study is the matter-of-fact diary which, about fifty years ago, Wilhelm Preyer, the German physiologist, kept of his own son from the hour of his birth until his fourth birthday. So effective and revealing was this simple method that it was subsequently adopted by other investigators, notably by Clara and William Stern in Breslau; but as soon as the educational world became intoxicated by the statistical accuracy of mental tests it fell into disrepute. It has recently, however, been brilliantly revived in the work of Karl and Charlotte Buehler at the Psychological Institute in Vienna and by Jean Piaget at the Institute J-J. Rousseau of Geneva.

These investigators have had the advantage of extending Preyer's method to large groups of children under more or less continuous, but unobtrusive, supervision, and of supplementing it when necessary by simple experiments. Their results throw

a piercing light on the highfalutin theories which today inform the more Advanced Education.

The most fundamental of the current pedagogic beliefs is that the average child is by its very nature a supreme artist. Give a baby a pot of paint, say the Creative Educators, and "something mysterious and sacred happens to him; . . . the creative instinct manifests itself." And pretty soon "evidences of a sense of proportion, balance and symmetry appear." Here we have no vulgar representation, but true art, "pure forms with only subjective meanings."

To all of which Buehler, after a careful study of the actual pictorial efforts of children, offers a polite boloney. When it comes to the sacred creative instinct, he finds the child to be a confirmed "intellectualist" and one altogether pleased with his own intellect. Give him a pencil and he will draw, to be sure, but what he draws are *things*—men and houses and dogs and trees. These objects show no evidences whatever of proportion or balance. They are not pure art, nor even realistic art. The child draws, not what he feels, or even what he sees, but what he thinks he *knows*.

He knows, for example, that a man has two eyes, and so, drawing full face or profile, he gets them both in. A house has four sides, and he indicates them all, letting the roof fit as it may. And what, from the child's point of view, asks Buehler, is an arm? Something that "can be stretched out sideways and can hold something. So the child draws a line from the body. It does not matter to what point it is attached"—nor where it reaches. If it should extend to the arm of another man that the child has already placed in a far corner of his paper, it will get there, even if in doing so it becomes twice as long as

both men are tall. And its creator will be content, for he has drawn, to his entire satisfaction, two men shaking hands.

Provide him with the best of models and of teachers and he will continue to draw the same way. Because, as Buehler explains, artistic talent is as unevenly distributed in this world as anything else and "it is only the more talented child who will benefit from good instruction." When we consider the average child, it is "a serious error to suppose that a radical change can be brought about by the 'back to nature' method."

Even if these factual investigations rob a child of its innate artistry, they must surely leave it that "objectivity and vividness of imagination" over which its admirers have been marvelling for several centuries? To which Buehler's researches provide the ready reply that if children take their "world of make-believe" as seriously as their chroniclers suppose them to, they ought all to be slapped straightway into an insane asylum, for they are suffering from more tenacious delusions than the wildest maniac. Furthermore, if we grant children those vivid powers of "creative imagination" we must extend the same privilege to the young of predatory animals. For the play of a child when "it puts on a top hat, takes a stick in its hand and imitates the grown-ups," differs from that of puppies and kittens, "who chase and stalk each other as they would their prey, and then do not bite in earnest" in only two closely related particulars. It is considerably more varied and more genuinely imitative.

In its play a child may repeat everything that happens in the home and every event it hears about, but always it is repeating, not creating. It is true, Buehler admits, that into these "dramatic games of imitation" a child, after a while, manages

to project a goodly amount of feeling, but to say that it ever confuses them with reality is poppycock. As proof of this he cites the case of a little girl, who after insisting that her doll was a real baby and that everyone else treat it so, suddenly, on account of a hidden mechanism, found the baby making just those sounds and movements with which her make-believe had endowed it. And was she pleased? Not in the least. She "got a big shock" and drew back "in panic."

So Buehler concludes that it is highly "questionable whether there are more imaginative processes present in the child's mind when it is apparently manipulating objects that are not present at all—*e.g.*, when it counts out coins in its shop or sings an invisible doll to sleep in its arms—than the shadowy and fleeting impressions experienced by adults in similar situations."

However similar children's and adult's imaginings may be, it is admitted generally that their conversation and thoughts are different, and one of the most potent arguments for packing a baby off to nursery school before it can toddle is that there its learning will be facilitated by communing with its cooing contemporaries. But against this Piaget offers convincing data that a child gets nothing from its contemporaries, because before the age of seven or eight, it is ego-centric to an extent incomprehensible to even the most self-centered of adults.

Now, this does not mean that it is secretive, but just the opposite. A child cannot keep anything to itself. It must put into spoken words every thought it has, every action it contemplates and it feels impelled to add a descriptive vocal accompaniment to all its deeds. And it much prefers an audience for these recitations; in fact it shows its awareness that it has

one by liberally prefacing its observations with I say's. But whether its auditors understand, or even hear, one word it utters makes not the slightest difference to it. When a child makes the same remark to two different companions, says Piaget, "it is in nowise astonished when it is neither listened to nor answered."

After recording for several months the entire verbatim conversation of the twenty children, ranging in age from four to seven years, in his *Maison des Petits*, Piaget discovered that before eight a child never converses with its contemporaries at all. It threatens them and contradicts them and echoes the words they say. But it never tries to inform them and it rarely expects an answer when it asks them a question.

Before the age of five all differences of opinion are settled, not by words but by bodily blows, and after that, until nine, by a series of flatly contradictory assertions that lead to the same physical result, as this verbal argument between six- and seven-year-olds illustrates:

LIL (*to Ga*): She's nice.

Ez (*who has hitherto taken no part in the conversation*): No.

Mo (*who also has paid no attention to what has gone before*): Yes, yes, yes.

Ez (*to Mo*): You'll see what a slap I'll give you.

The only example of a genuine exchange of ideas among all twenty children occurred when a seven-year-old discussed with a six-year-old the absence of *Made-moiselle*. And this terminated in a strange logical conclusion which, as Piaget remarks, is hardly of a "high intellectual order":

MAD: Oh, the slow-coach!

LEV: She doesn't know it's late.

MAD: Well, I know what she is.

LEV: And I know where she is.

MAD: She's ill.

LEV: She isn't ill because she isn't here.

Continuing his observations with a series of simple experiments in which he tried to get the children to explain to one another facts with which they were familiar, Piaget found this to be impossible, and came to the conclusion that before the age of seven or eight there can be no true verbal understanding between children. And the reason for this is their predominant egocentrism—the one mental trait which makes all their thinking so similar and so different from adult's.

So confident is a child that he already knows all there is to be known, that he makes no effort to understand what he is told, but customarily "goes on thinking without ever emerging from his egocentric groove." And so sure is he that his is the pattern after which the rest of the universe is constructed that he assumes that everyone else should know what he does; so instead of troubling to make his meaning clear to his listeners, "he talks as though to the empty air." Thus a group of children may be discoursing animatedly about the same subject, and apparently conversing together, while, in fact, each is paying not the slightest attention to any other but taking an active part in what Piaget happily terms a "collective monologue."

The conversation of a child with his equals, however, is different from that with adults. And it has recently become a truism among modern popularizers of knowledge and extollers of children that the same urge prompts the scientist to peer into his test tube, the metaphysician to enquire into the infinite, and the child to ask its parents "Why?" Conscientious parents, fortified by the most newly approved Outlines and a prodigious patience, have striven valiantly to satisfy this crav-

ing. To those parents who are less conscientious or who cannot meet the second payment on the Book of Knowledge, Piaget has comforting words to say. After analyzing 1125 spontaneous questions asked of the same adult by a boy from the time he was six years and three months old until he was seven years and one month, Piaget has decided that it makes little difference how we answer a child's questions—or whether we answer them at all.

In the first place, just because a child lets drop a "Why" when addressing an adult does not invariably mean that he expects an answer. Often he is only making a simple assertion or, and more frequently still, contradicting his elder with cunning tact. "The child," says Piaget, "is apparently asking 'Why do you say this?' or 'Why do you want this?' etc. As a matter of fact the question simply amounts to saying 'That's not true' or 'I don't want to.'" So an adult who values his peace of mind will leave these "whys of motivation" strictly unattended to.

Even when he encounters a childish question that is genuinely interrogatory the adult can never be certain how it should be answered, for the simple reason that to children anything at all can be the reason for anything else. In their own thinking children regularly perform this mental feat, as did the little girl of ten who insisted that the proverb, "White dust will ne'er come out of a sack of coal," had the same meaning as "Those who waste their time neglect their business," because "People who waste their time don't look after their children properly. They don't wash them, and they become black as coal, and no white dust comes out."

Consequently, says Piaget, when a child asks "Why do the trees have leaves?" it

is quite useless to begin an explanatory dissertation on botany. The answer "Because God put them there," or "Because they have," or "Because they want to" will satisfy him just as well.

In fact, that is precisely the kind of answer the child has been asking for. He does not go about the world scattering indiscriminate "Whys" because he thirsts for information, but because he needs a justification for whatever he sees. His interest in inanimate objects is, in Piaget's words, "feeble." He cares nothing about the hows of things. When he asks a question he wants neither a mechanical explanation nor a logical reason; he seeks a psychological explanation and a final cause.

Explain to a child about lightning as scientifically as you can. He may under-

stand what you say and remember it, but instead of satisfying his curiosity you have only aroused it the more. And the next day he will be inquiring, as Piaget discovered one doing, "Daddy says that it makes itself all by itself in the sky. But why? But isn't there everything that is needed to light a fire with up in the sky?"

This question reopens a prevalent problem in adult psychology. Those grown-ups who are forever seeking final causes feel a pitying superiority to those content with factual explanations. And it must be generally admitted that the vitalist has some mental trait which the mechanist lacks. But is this trait, after all, anything more than a survival of the positive childish conviction that if the heavens possess the ingredients of a fire they must certainly hold a Someone to set it blazing?



# SUNDAY

BY JAMES T. FARRELL

A HAPPY man was Peter. He earned \$105 a month working as a janitor around the university. His working hours were from noon to ten in the evening, with a two-hour intermission for supper; however, he rarely took the full two hours. He was over fifty, and he worked strenuously, so that he often went home tired; but his job gave him security, and it had its advantages. He had no boss glowering over him all day, and he was able, on occasion, to pause for a breath of air, or for a few words with his friend Charley.

Also, there was variety in the tasks that he performed. He emptied waste baskets. He swept and mopped floors. He washed windows, a feature of his work that he enjoyed immensely, because he knew that he was the best window washer about the university. Around supper time he relieved the elevator operator in the main library, and was able to pass the time, commenting on the weather and the nature of life and the world, with students as they rode up and down. And then there was the grandest task of all, that of wearing a braided uniform and guarding entrance ways, collecting tickets, and controlling waiting lines at university functions.

On an early June Sunday Peter felt very tired, and was grateful for his day of rest. After washing the dinner dishes he decided to take a walk. Mrs. Cordel, kindly neighbor that she was, had some

sewing to do, and promised to sit in with his invalid mother. Peter's mother was over eighty, and he was her gray-haired baby boy. She loved him in a cranky, nagging, jealous, old woman's way, and she was always promising him the spanking which she said he deserved. She was fond of telling this to Mrs. Cordel, or to whatever other rare visitors they had. She would also tell them that if he was a good and dutiful son she would permit him to get married when he reached the age of sixty-five.

She was extremely difficult, but he cared for her with great devotion. He had vowed to himself that he would provide for her as well as possible, so long as there was strength left in his body. And he was keeping that vow. Sometimes she told Mrs. Cordel that he beat and starved her, and left her alone to go out traipsing with evil women, but she was old, and could be forgiven. She was his mother, and you had only one mother.

Others might have sent her to the poorhouse, but never would he be such an ingrate. She was worth all the sacrifices he made, even that one of the previous Summer, when he had postponed his trip to New York. For three years he had stinted himself, saving to visit New York on his vacation. He had got the money together. Then, on the eve of his departure, his mother had become seriously ill. He had abandoned the trip, spending his vacation nursing her, and also spending his

vacation money on her. He could have sent her to the university clinic, but that would have been filial ingratitude. She was his mother. He was proud of the sacrifice he had made for her, even though it would take him at least another three years to get together sufficient money for that trip to New York.

## II

Today he went out for his Sunday walk, leaving his mother with kindly Mrs. Cordel.

He felt rested walking along the sunny, doze-ful Sabbath streets. The sun was warm, and Sunday was so calm and peaceful. He walked along, and life was a chalice of quiet, filled with sunny incantations. He walked slowly, thinking of his mother, proud of his dutifulness, happy. But vaguely and inarticulately beneath the surface of his happiness there was a consciousness of the fact that he was declining into old age.

Suddenly he was distracted by a passing, newly shined and washed automobile. Gee, he wished that he owned an automobile, so that he could take his mother out driving in the park on a Sunday afternoon. And to the country. Just think, he hadn't been out in the country in years. He wondered what it looked like these days.

He walked slowly toward the park. His mother, he reflected, would soon be dead. Sometimes he dreamed that she was dead already, and he felt that it was a sign warning him that he would not have her with him much longer. Clenching his fists, he solemnly reiterated his vow to care for her. He was still pretty strong and spry, you bet. But his hair was gray, and he had turned fifty. Once he had had many days of life ahead of him. But now

—well, the days that were ahead were not so many.

The green park seemed healthy with people. He walked amongst the crowds, and was warmed and sustained by their presence and number. Unnurtured, hungry little impulses for companionship ached within him. It was so good just to walk along, and see people, and they looked so happy playing, picnicking, strolling, sitting, talking. And the grass spread out so brilliantly under the sun, and was so deeply green and cool in the shade.

Yes, he told himself, it was nice to see people. They were on every bench, on the grass, on the walks, playing tennis, in rowboats on the lagoon. And the young girls, moving in twos and threes, and hanging on the arms of young lads—yes, the young girls: he looked closely at them, at the hints of breasts and thighs beneath their fresh and summery dresses.

He wished that he had something to do, and he ambled along down a path that was cathedralled with tree spreads. Nice! Looking lonesomely about him, he observed a contented family of Mexicans, clean, dark, good-looking people, the husband smiling with love upon his slim young wife as she watched their two youngsters chasing squirrels, trying to feed them peanuts, but scaring them away. He boiled with resentment, thinking that it was wrong to permit Mexicans in a good white man's park. Down farther he observed a group of noisy, dirty Irish, two beefy females shrieking at their children to stay out of the dirt. There were some people, he thought, who didn't get along together.

He walked on, and all around him was the park, drenched in its warming sunlight, scenes alive with sensuous and bubbling life. The world was very very good. But along the benches he could see some

lonely men and women, frustration written clearly on their faces. They were like him. They walked along or sat on the benches, unhappy, and lonesome in the midst of laughing, happy people. Frustration was scrawled on their countenances.

His drifting attention centered upon an aging couple walking before him; they were corpulent, and had a country look about them. They walked on, eyes set rigidly to the front, neither speaking. He followed them for a few hundred yards. Then they took a vacant bench, and sat speechless, eyes still rigidly glued on the bushes directly before them, lips clamped quiet. He passed them, wondering what he would do.

Fat pigeons waddled near him, jerking their heads and necks, and waving their bottoms. He looked from the pigeons to a girl seated on a bench, a cigarette in her thick mouth. She was a tough-looking one, he felt. Her legs were crossed, exposing naked stretches of thigh. He stared. She met his stare with an unwavering sneer, and manipulated her legs to give him a fuller view. She inhaled nonchalantly. He slunk along. Shame lapped within him. But she had been a looker, even if she was brazen.

He reflected that he saw plenty of lookers every day on the campus. Some of them were sweet girls, good too. But when a fellow has been janitor around a university for quite a while he learns that you can't ever tell what a girl is from how she looks. Yes sir, a fellow who is a janitor around a university sees plenty of things that are never meant to be seen. Like that little doll of a girl he caught with a fellow on the plushed stairway leading to the chapel tower, and right at the very moment when the dean of the chapel was speaking the word of God.

Them two had thought they wouldn't

be caught. Well, they were, and he had called the other guard too, and he had only done his duty, and the officials had only done what was right in expelling them. They should have more sense of right and decency than to do a thing like that in the million-dollar chapel, right when the dean was explaining the word of God. He had only done his duty in turning them in. And if everybody did his duty like he had, this world would be better off.

Yes sir, students who had a chance to get educated should put their time in better than doing things like that right on the plush stairway of the million-dollar chapel. He sure wished that he had an education. If he had had the chance to get one, he sure would have taken advantage of it, and he wouldn't be a janitor now. He was satisfied with his job, but gee, if he had only had an education. Some people just don't have opportunities, and more often than not, them that does get an opportunity don't take proper advantage of it. He shrugged his shoulders. Well, he was better off than many.

A pigeon flew before him. It descended in a downward parabola, shot by his ear, wings flapping rhythmically, and soared over the trees, disappearing. Gee, it was nice the way birds could fly.

### III

He wondered what he should do, and crossed a driveway, on which the cars moved ceaselessly. The people in those cars must be going some place. He wished he had a car, and was taking his mother out in it at this minute. But Charley was saying to him, only yesterday, that most of them that has cars and many such things is up to their ears in debt, borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. He could be

proud; he owed not a penny to any man. It was every man's duty to live within his means. But if he only did own an automobile! Gee!

He traveled along the edge of the golf course, watching the knickered golfers, almost like priests performing the rites of a strange religion. He thought that golf must be an interesting game. Everybody, almost, seemed to play it. Millionaires, and university professors, and even the President of the United States put on knickers and played golf.

He yawned, and wished that he could think of something to do.

He sat on a bench near one of the holes, and watched foursomes come and go. Many players were stern and serious about the game, and it caused him to reflect a second time that there must be something to it. In back of him were trees and a clump of bushes. The frail wind sang through the leaves, sad. He grew afraid of the wind, and its monotonous sough seemed like a prophecy of death. The wind was sad all right. He did not like to hear it moan in the trees like that; it made him creepy. He had once been young, and he had never been bothered by wind in the trees. Now he was older, and it made him afraid.

He sat there and tried to throw off his sadness by watching the people come and go, and especially by watching very closely when girls approached the hole, because their dresses might fluff up. He watched the golfers teeing off for the next hole. It was a great thing, the way some of them could drive that little ball. It took a lot of time and thought and practice to do it that good. And it must have taken smart men to think up a game that everybody wanted to play and was so serious about. Everybody couldn't think up a game that even the President of the United States,

university professors, and millionaires played.

The wind soughed in back of him.

A girl came, and as she bent over to place her ball for the tee-off, her dress ruffled, and he saw a bit of bare flesh above her stocking. Girls didn't wear much clothing any more. He watched the ball roll along after her ineffective drive.

A spindly-legged, fat fellow, in pantaloons knickers, histrionically stanced himself, and drove. The ball outcurved on a wicked line, and disappeared in the distant grass. The fat fellow laughed boisterously. Others teed off, and the last of the four, a man with a small and thin head, sliced his drive and cursed.

Peter watched the steady succession of golfers. Then, he arose and walked on. He was lonely. But he felt less lonely in the park where there were so many people than he would have at home, with only his mother. He looked at the girls. He wished he would meet someone he knew, someone from the university, perhaps a coed. He wanted to talk. Gee, he wished that he would meet Charley. Good old Charley. Golly, he liked good old Charley all right. When the boss had offered him that job at the clinic, with five men under him, he had turned it down because he didn't want to shoulder the responsibility; but he had recommended Charley in his place, and now Charley was doing fine at it. He wasn't at all stuck up, but acted just the same as he always had. There was something between him and Charley that was deeper than what they ever said to each other. They were friends. He liked to meet Charley, and maybe stop to talk and kid with him for a minute or two.

"Quit stalling," Charley would say.

"I don't see you breaking your neck," he would say.

"Never mind me," Charley would say.

"And never you mind me," he would say.

"I bet you ain't done a lick of work all day," Charley would say.

"No!" he would then say, meaning it the other way around, of course.

"No," Charley would say, all in fun, because he was that way.

"You're a great kiddier," Peter would say.

"I ain't neither. I know you ain't done a lick of work all day," Charley would go on and say.

"Listen," Peter would go on and say.

"I know you too well to let you bull me along," Charley would say.

"I'm not bullying you. Come on around to my building and I'll show you what I done," Peter would say.

"I ain't got no time for that," Charley would say.

"Gwan!" Peter would say.

"Gwan yourself," Charley would say.

Good old Charley. He'd have to ask Charley to come and take a walk with him in the park next Sunday, because there was something very deep between him and Charley.

He passed over grass, delicately colored by the sun. Restful! Good old Charley!

#### IV

He trooped along, westward, to the ball diamonds. He stood along the left-field foul-line, and in back of him was a rectangular stretch of grass, where women sat, and mothers watched their children. He didn't understand the game, but it was nice to watch it, although the two teams seemed always excited, and it looked like there would be a fight between them almost any minute. He hoped there wouldn't be a fight, because once he had stopped to watch a ball game and a fight

had started, and darned if he hadn't got punched in the eye.

Peter watched the game, half asleep. He saw the pitcher wind up. He saw the batter swing, too soon, and drive a vicious, curving foul just over the heads of the crowd by third base. He heard a frantic feminine shriek, and saw people rushing to where the ball had landed on the stretch of grass. He rushed there too, and milled with the crowd around a mother who moaned and yelled hysterically over a two-year-old baby that had been struck by the ball.

People yelled to give them air. The mother's wails continued. No one knew what to do. Finally, a park policeman elbowed his way through the crowd and took control. Then someone got a doctor. Peter heard someone else in front of him say that the baby was dead. The mother wailed. She continued wailing as Peter edged out of the crowd, and walked away, nauseated, afraid.

He walked very slowly. He was weak with horror. He did not know what to say or think. He tried to figure out who was to blame, because if he could figure out somebody to blame for the accident, then he would know what to think about it, and he would feel less horrified. He walked on in a semi-stupor. He tried to eradicate the occurrence from his memory, but it bobbed back, clung to his mind like an obsession.

He sat down on a bench beside an old codger. He was impelled to tell someone about it, so he described the death of the baby to the old codger, his language confused and unclear. When he had finished, he felt relieved. The old codger, losing his temper, declared that the baby's mother should be put in the penitentiary. They talked, and the codger insisted, at great length and with many reiterations,

that the cause of such things was the modern age.

Peter nodded his head. They sat there on the bench, silent, talked out. Peter finally remarked that it was a nice day. The old codger agreed with a yep. Peter reaffirmed that it was a nice day with a yeah. The old codger assured Peter that it certainly was a nice day, and added that he sure hoped that it wouldn't rain. Peter also hoped that it wouldn't rain. The old codger reflected that you never could tell about the weather. They sat silent. The old codger arose and hobbled off.

Peter sat. Again the memory of the accident bobbed up. He sat there dazed, watching the people file past him. If he just sat there and watched the people going by he could forget about the baby.

A pigeon waddled close to his feet. He whistled and the bird drew closer. But he had no food for it, so it flew off. He sat, and trembled, remembering how the baby had been killed, almost before his very eyes. The wind in the trees behind him was again sad and disturbing. The thought of death forced itself upon him. Almost inarticulately he felt that his life was shriveling up, that he was slowly dropping away like leaves drifting from an Autumn tree. People moved on the path by him. Girls, young and feminine, lookers, passed by him. He slipped into a state of half-dozing, and the horror of death lost its sharp edges, becoming an undefined and wordless melancholy. Suddenly, he blinked his eyes, and sat erect. He heard the wind again in the trees behind him. He could not stand to hear it. He arose and walked on, away from the wind.

The wind and that baby! Terrible. He walked more swiftly. A woman, sloppy, with a bag of peanuts in her hand, was feeding the pigeons. He laughed when

he heard her speaking love-words to them. She was not all there, he felt. He paused to watch a squirrel shying through the bushes. A black bird, slim and sleek as a well-dressed girl, walked close to his feet.

He informed himself that nature and trees and birds were all nice, and sort of haunted with something, something mysterious. And the sun was like that too; it was warmer than when he had started out. It boiled down on his face. It would be nice if he could forget that baby, but he kept remembering. He walked. The grass was crowded with colors, delicate, softly blending, sad glad colors. He walked.

Skirting the far corner of the park, down near the end of the golf course, he heard a screech of motor brakes. The sharp, rending echoes sounded like the wail of a mortally injured dog. He became convinced that they were its ebbing life cries. He hurried forward to see the dying dog. He cursed an unknown motorist for having murdered it. He knew that when he saw the dog, bleeding, perhaps dead already, he would feel sick. But he ran on. He stopped at the crossing just outside the park. He saw only the ceaseless stream of tangling Sunday traffic. He breathed in relief. It had been only an automobile after all.

He walked along a quiet street, flanked with suburban cottages and large, pastry-like apartment buildings. He paused to look at the gee-gawed cornices. He wished he could live in a beautiful building like that. He looked at the automobiles lining the curb. It would be nice to own one of them, all right. And one of these lawns, too, so that he could water it at night in his shirt sleeves.

He walked on until he reached Seventy-first street. It was lined with stores, and the railroad tracks ran down the center



of the street. Across from him, between the parallel tracks, was the long platform of a station. It looked like the main street of a small town. He stood in front of a drug-store, watching the people eddy around him.

Dinging bells announced the approach of a train. The safety gates were lowered, and automobiles, with sharp soundings and gratings of their brakes, drew to a halt before the gate. Their horns and klaxons racketed. The warning bells dinged on. The train grunted into the station.

The noise and confusion seemed to numb Peter's nerve centers. He stood like one paralyzed, his mouth hanging open, his eyes fixed in an immobile and fearful stare. The train passed, and the gates were lifted. Automobile traffic was resumed. Slowly, like a man awakening from sleep, he regained his equilibrium. He stood looking at the people on the sidewalk. Gee, he'd been scared. Golly! Holy Moses!

He wandered along Seventy-first street, gaping in at the store windows. He stood and surveyed the sky. He paused and listened before a street radio to a broadcast

of a baseball game. He moved back in the direction from which he had come, and stood before the operatic entrance of the neighborhood movie, where blaring electric signs and melodramatic posters announced Dennis King in "The Vagabond King."

Should he see the show? It would cost forty cents. Could he afford it? He wondered. He walked away from the theatre, on down several blocks, wondering over the temptation to spend the forty cents, fingering the change in his pocket. He walked back, and looked at the pictures in front of the theatre. Suddenly, he bought a ticket, and slunk into the show.

When he entered the sky was clear and blue, and the sun was shining. He sat in the pitch darkness of a poorly ventilated building, seeing romance leap, sing, and bluster across a sheet of cloth. When he came out, it was dark and a trifle cool. He rode home to his mother on the trolley, thinking of the picture he had seen. He thought of what he'd tell Charlie about it. And that song, "Only a Rose." Across from him sat a girl, her legs crossed. He became interested. He saw so much that he rode on past his corner.

# THE LAW OF THE CHASE

BY WILLIAM SEAGLE

TO JUDGE by the existing American game codes, American sportsmen are simply frightful fellows. The old English hunting squires must turn in their graves at their behavior. Apparently many of the traditional methods of hunting are no more among us. The American gentry do not go off casually for a day's gunning on foot but proceed to the chase mounted upon Fords, Chevrolets and Chryslers. At least this appears to be the case, for the law in almost every State forbids hunting from automobiles. Moreover, this new mechanized hunting apparently does not go on only in broad daylight, but also in the dead of night, for many laws have been enacted in recent years which prohibit the use of automobile headlights in the chase, and this, too, despite the fact that there already existed laws which forbade all night hunting.

But now an even greater menace than the automobile threatens American game. It seems that passengers in air liners and pilots of mail planes have fallen into the habit of taking pot shots at birds in flight, and at game animals dozing in the sun. So the laws of nearly every State now forbid hunting from land planes or hydro-planes. Those of two States are particularly notable. A statute of Indiana prohibits only the hunting of insectivorous birds from airplanes. Don't shoot until you actually see the worm in the bird's beak. Under a law of Colorado an aviator does not even have to shoot at a bird to be guilty of a

misdemeanor. "It shall be unlawful," the law provides, "to fly over any natural or artificial lakes, reservoirs, or bodies of water in such manner that will frighten or disturb birds upon the shores or surface of such bodies of water, at an altitude of less than 500 feet."

For some unknown reason hunting from the windows of railroad cars has generally not been the subject of statutory prohibition. An exception is a law of Idaho, which specifically interdicts it. The same law, moreover, also forbids hunting from the platforms of interurban trolleys. A common type of game legislation prohibits the pursuit of game from or along a railroad track, or railroad right of way.

The baying hounds can now be heard upon the hunting scene in only a minority of States. In the rest the use of dogs is prohibited altogether, or at least at certain times or in the pursuit of certain animals. Delaware prohibits hunting with a dog wearing a bell or bells. Sometimes the number of dogs is regulated and sometimes the use of a dog (or ferret) to dislodge an animal from a hole is prohibited. The type of firearms which may be carried is also frequently limited. Apparently American sportsmen use cannon, howitzers, sawed-off shot-guns, and other such types of lethal weapons. Vermont and a few other States have special laws forbidding the use of machine-guns. Curiously, neither New York nor Illinois has such laws. But New York does have a statute

which expressly allows the use of the bow and arrow. It is one of the few reminders in the American game laws of the spirit of merrie England.

The hunting of deer is regulated with particular stringency. The bag limit is usually confined to one or two bucks a season, and sometimes the destruction by a hunter of the evidence of a deer's sex is penalized. The use of dogs is commonly prohibited, as is also shooting at deer while they are in water. In Massachusetts and Pennsylvania they may be hunted only with a simple shotgun or a bow and arrow. The Massachusetts law prescribes that "no person shall carry on his person an arrow adapted for hunting purposes unless it is plainly marked with his name and permanent address."

Most States also forbid the hunting of deer whose horns do not meet certain specifications. Some content themselves with providing merely that the horns must be pronged. Others stipulate the number of prongs to the antler. In Michigan, New Jersey, New York and Vermont the horns must be at least three inches long; in Montana, Utah and New Mexico they must be four, five, and six inches respectively. Such laws put a hunter in a painful dilemma. If he fires at a deer when he is close enough to be sure of the length of its horns he is certainly no sportsman, and if he fires from a distance he is likely to become a scofflaw.

The law of Wisconsin prohibits the hunting of deer less than one year old, so that deer in this State must presumably carry birth certificates. In Maine they may not be possessed in lumber camps. But the prize deer law is that of Utah which provides: "Every person while hunting deer shall wear a red cap." That should make it easy for railroad-station porters on their holidays. Or perhaps the law of Texas is

to be preferred, which makes it unlawful to call to a deer "except by rattling deer horns."

Some other game animals are also the subjects of rather notable provisions. A law of Texas prohibits the killing of the common bat. A law of Indiana prohibits the hunting of the American or bald eagle, despite its depredations upon domestic fowl, because, as the law recites, it is "the emblem of the United States of America." A law of Alabama makes it unlawful to hunt a wild hog "without first giving notice to at least three freeholders in the neighborhood." Is the hog, after it is located, supposed to wait, or is it the intention of the law to prohibit the hunting of wild hogs except by four freeholders? An old law of Wyoming, still on the books, makes it a felony to hunt the practically extinct buffalo.

There are even more special types of laws for the protection of birds. A statute of Kansas makes it a misdemeanor to hunt birds which are sitting on the ground: a bird perched on one foot must present a difficult problem. A curious kind of bird sanctuary is established by laws of California, Idaho, North Dakota and Oklahoma, which sternly prohibit the trapping of birds in cemeteries. A law of New Jersey makes it unlawful to hunt partridge, grouse, pheasant, quail or woodcock (as well as rabbit and hare) while the ground is covered with enough snow to show tracks. There are similar laws in Delaware and Maryland.

In California, New Jersey, New York, and South Carolina it is ordained that hunters may kill cats when they discover them in the act of stalking birds of species protected by the game laws. Obviously, the cats in those States should learn to read. The protection of birds has been carried to such an extent that in Pennsylvania

it is cautiously provided that "no law in this Commonwealth shall be construed to prevent the keeping of birds in cages as domestic pets." Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma and South Dakota have similar statutes.

Water fowl are particular favorites of the legislators. They are almost everywhere protected against hunters in power boats and sometimes in ordinary boats. There are also numerous regulations relating to blinds and decoys. A South Dakota law prohibits hunting water fowl by taking advantage of the existence of a sand bar. A Washington law not only provides that the oars of rowboats used in hunting them must be at least five feet long, but also requires "the person rowing therein to be in an upright position and visible at all times from the waist up." Slouch at your peril.

In Michigan, on the other hand, the hunters rather than the fowl are the objects of protection. "It shall be unlawful," a law of this State declares, "for any person or persons to wilfully scare or drive wild ducks or other wild water fowl, or cause the same to be done, from or away from any person lawfully hunting the same, for the purpose of depriving or attempting to deprive such person of any or all of his opportunities of shooting or hunting such wild duck or other wild water fowl."

In Oklahoma it is unlawful to pursue game near a church, or school, "or other public assembly." In Wisconsin it is illegal to hunt within half a mile of a hospital or sanitarium. In Oregon it is illegal to hunt within the corporate limits of a town or city, or in a public park or cemetery, or on the campus of a school, college, or university. An Indiana law makes it a misdemeanor to hunt or even disturb a squirrel in a public park. Many States have

laws prohibiting hunting on the public highways. In Oregon it is unlawful to hunt on an island.

## II

Apparently American fishermen are an even more desperate lot than American hunters. They do not believe in patience or watchful waiting. They do not carry with them hook and line or the traditional can of worms. Above all, there is nothing quiet in their activities.

These are the conclusions which must be drawn from the laws upon the books of almost all the States relating to prohibited modes of fishing. It is almost everywhere strictly prohibited to use dynamite or other explosives in taking fish. In some States there are even laws against attempting to electrocute them by passing a current of electricity through a stream. In many States it is also forbidden to attempt to poison them or to stupefy them by pouring liquor into their retreats. Some laws which must date from pre-Volsteadean days even specifically mention alcohol as one of the stupefying agents. Finally, in a good number of States it is a crime to take fish by damming up a stream, or drawing the water off a pond, or by gigging, pegging, or seining.

Less general forms of prohibition are aimed at far more ingenious if less spectacular practices. In Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky and Washington fishermen apparently leave home in the morning armed with rifles, for laws in these States prohibit firing at fish. To quote the Georgia law: "If any person shall use any kind of firearms for the purpose of killing fish in Georgia, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." Laws of Indiana, Kansas and North Carolina are aimed against fishing by "feeling by hand," and a

South Carolina law prohibits fishing by "tickling."

A Louisiana law provides that "it shall be unlawful for any person to muddy or 'puddle' any waters for the purpose of taking fish thereby." A law of Florida forbids the use of goldfish as bait, and a law of Washington commands that "no fishing appliance or device of any kind whatsoever . . . shall occupy more than one third of the width of the waters of any stream or river." An even more remarkable law of New Mexico makes it unlawful "to catch or take game fish from lakes or reservoirs of less than ten square miles in extent." No fishing party in this lovely State can go forth safely unaccompanied by a surveyor.

An absolute prohibition of fishing through the ice is very common. Some States, however, seek to discourage rather than absolutely forbid it. A North Dakota law bans the erection or maintenance of a shelter against the weather, and a South Dakota law is similar, except that it allows such a shelter when it is necessary to get fish through the ice "for domestic use." The best drafted laws, however, are those of Iowa and Indiana. The Iowa law says: "No person shall have, erect, or use while fishing on or through the ice any house, shed, or other protection against the weather, or *have or use any stove for creating artificial heat.*" The Indiana law prohibits fishing through the ice "through more than two holes . . . or through a hole more than 2½ feet in diameter, or with more than one line to each hole, or with more than one hook attached to such line, or within any house, shanty or structure which will obstruct a full view of such fishing."

Trout fishing ranks with deer hunting in the care with which it is regulated. One luxurious method of trout fishing has been

particularly banned. "It shall be a misdemeanor," a law of Idaho provides, "for any person to fish for trout from the back of any animal, or to travel up and down in any stream on the back of any animal while fishing for trout." Apparently this law is not aimed at fishing from the back of an elephant or a giraffe, but only at fishing from horseback. This may be judged from a law of Utah which provides: "It shall be a misdemeanor to fish *from the back of a horse*, or to travel up and down a stream *on horseback* while fishing for trout or mountain herring."

A number of laws seem to be aimed at the prevention of cruelty to fish, not to mention mollusks, crustaceans, and amphibians. In Colorado there is one which ordains that every person catching a fish must kill it at once, or, if desirous of keep it alive, place it immediately "in a suitable receptacle containing sufficient water and given proper care and attention." A curious Nebraska law provides that "all fish upon which there is no open season shall be returned to the water at once with as little injury as possible, if caught, and before taking or attempting to take such fish from the hook, *it shall be the duty of the angler to first wet his hands.*"

A law of Massachusetts declares that "whoever, before a lobster is cooked, mutilates it by severing the tail from the body, or has such tail in possession, shall be punished by a fine of five dollars," and Rhode Island has a similar law. A Louisiana law allows frogs to be taken by mechanical devices known as frog-catchers, "provided these do not puncture the skin of the animal." In Georgia it is a misdemeanor to "catch oysters by the use of any other instrument than the oyster tongs hitherto in general use."

Fishing stories have always been discounted, but to come home with a big

catch has always been considered a pretty good proof of prowess. To be sure, there have been skeptics to suspect that the fish were bought rather than caught. The truth, alas, appears to be even worse than this, for it seems they are sometimes stolen from other fishermen. At all events, Connecticut, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington have laws penalizing the stealing of fish from the catch of another person. "It shall be unlawful," the Tennessee law reads, "for any person to take fish out of the box, net or basket, or off the hook of another person." The Washington law very properly stigmatizes such an act as "a gross misdemeanor."

### III

It should be obvious by this time that it is really unsafe for anyone not a lawyer to go hunting or fishing in America. At the least, a copy of the local game code should repose in every game-bag. Apart from the provisions relating to prohibited methods of hunting or fishing and prohibited game, the sportsman has to reckon with long and complex regulations governing seasons and bag limits. He must have his calendar always handy, and above all his field-glasses to identify game, and his ruler and micrometer to measure fish. The mode of measuring fish is sometimes prescribed—for instance, that the measurement shall be "from the end of the tail to the end of the spinal column." And to the closed seasons must often be added the Lord's Day, on which hunting or fishing is prohibited in many States.

But the law-abiding citizen must do a great deal more than watch his step in field and stream. He may as readily become a scofflaw when the day's hunting or fishing is over. In many States there are

either absolute prohibitions or numerous restrictions upon putting game into cold storage. Most States carefully regulate its transportation within the State as well as across the State line. Some years ago Idaho became alarmed at the possibility of evading its transportation law by shipping game by airplane. It proceeded to pass a special law to prohibit such shipment, but the law has recently been repealed. Pennsylvania boasts a law against another form of evasion. "It shall be unlawful," it decrees, "to ship game or any part thereof, killed in a wild state, in this Commonwealth by parcel post." A California law is to the same effect.

A good number of States enforce a purely utilitarian conception of hunting and fishing: they have laws which make it a misdemeanor to waste the edible portions of any game or fish. Thus the law of Arkansas provides: "It shall be unlawful for any person to abandon or to permit to go to waste the edible portion of any game or fish in this State at any season of the year." Apparently the sportsman must eat until he bursts. The law of a few States specifically prohibits the hunting of game merely for the purpose of getting their ornamental portions. Washington, for example, prohibits hunting game only for the "head, hide, antlers, horns or tusks."

Some remarkably severe penalties are worth noting. The law of Ohio is particularly Draconian, for it enacts that "each fish, fowl, bird, bird's nest, egg, or plumage, and animal unlawfully caught, taken, killed, injured, destroyed, possessed, bought, sold, or shipped shall be a separate offence." Michigan, taking a hint from the Volstead Act, which confiscated conveyances used in the transportation of alcoholic beverages, has gone to the length of confiscating automobiles unlawfully used in any way in hunting. Until a few



years ago, when it was repealed, there was a Maine law forfeiting boats illegally used in taking lobsters. On the other hand, a way out is provided for the scofflaw in Montana. It is there made a defense to the violation of the fish and game laws that the act was "for the purpose of preventing great suffering by hunger." This is certainly a good Depression alibi.

Hunting at one time was the relaxation of the warrior. Its exertions were always personal. To engage in it one had to be sound of limb and wind. But it has often been remarked that the present is an effete age. Apparently, one can hunt by proxy while sitting at home enjoying all the comforts of domesticity. To forestall this five States—North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia—have enacted laws banning hunting for hire. The North Dakota law is particularly felicitous in its phraseology. It provides that "no person shall hire another person to hunt for him; no person shall hunt for remuneration for another." The next step in legislation will undoubtedly consist of prohibiting fishing for hire.

A few decades ago a comparatively few States required hunting or fishing licenses. They are now, however, required in almost all States, and for residents as well as non-residents. Certain classes of persons are sometimes excepted, however, such as soldiers, sailors, marines, Confederate veterans, and Indians. To Western gallantry must be credited a law of Colorado which exempts females from the necessity of securing fishing licenses. (The same State prohibits minors under eighteen from hunting big game.) Until last year Mississippi exempted citizens over seventy years of age.

But perhaps the most interesting law is the recent South Carolina statute entitled "An Act to Exempt All Orphans of any

Orphanage or Other Eleemosynary Institution In This State From Being Required to Purchase Hunting Licenses." There are, however, two conditions attached to this exemption: one, that the superintendent of the institution must be the holder of a hunting license, and the other, that the said superintendent must accompany the orphans on the hunt.

A unique license law is that of Wyoming. It is not only necessary to have a license to hunt, but also a license to take a photograph of any game, animal or bird "during the months of January, February, March and April."

There is a growing movement to restrict hunting and fishing to citizens of the Republic. In Colorado, North and South Dakota, and West Virginia aliens may not hunt, or possess firearms for that purpose. Nebraska and Wyoming have even gone to the extent of prohibiting the possession of firearms by aliens for any purpose whatsoever. In Pennsylvania they are not only forbidden to hunt but also to possess any dog that may conceivably be used in hunting. If an alien appears in the open with such a dog, he is *prima facie* guilty of violating the game laws. In West Virginia he is not allowed to go fishing, or to capture frogs or turtles. In Massachusetts he may not take lobsters unless a resident five years, and in Delaware he may not take lobsters at all. In Oregon he may not take salmon or oysters.

Finally, to the perils that beset the sportsman must be added the survival of much local game legislation and the instability of the existing codes. No uniform State game code existed in North Carolina, for instance, until 1927, when the multiplicity of county regulations was abolished. But even the State game codes often enact special provisions for different rivers, lakes, gulfs, straits, or bays. Thus in Florida

there are special rules for Lakes Kissimmee, Lizzie, Marion, Ocheesee, and Okeechobee; in Washington for Puget Sound, the Skagit river, the Columbia river, Gray's Harbor, Willapa Harbor, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. California has been divided into no less than seventy-five game districts, and one finds sections in the game code headed "Rabbits in District 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " and "Sea Lions (*Zalophus Californianus*) in Districts 19, 20, and 20A," as well as a provision that deer, to be lawful game, must have more than two branches to each antler in District 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ .

#### IV

The contest between the American sportsmen and the American legislators has been going on for over a century and a quarter. By 1800 fourteen States had fixed closed seasons for some of the game birds and animals. But the combat did not become truly earnest until the middle of the last century and did not wax furious until its closing decade. It has been estimated that from 1901 to 1912, 1,324 game laws were passed, apart from local ordinances. In 1918 the Federal government intervened by enacting a migratory birds act. Now hardly a legislative session passes without some addition to and alteration of the game laws.

But despite the multiplication of these laws, the game of the country is constantly threatened with extinction, and, as is well known, many species have been entirely or almost entirely wiped out. The American hunter has roamed over the continent and left destruction in his wake. Apart from his training in the code of the gentleman, the English squire who hunted on his own property had a direct interest in the preservation of wild life. But the code of the American sportsman was fashioned in a

free wilderness. The pioneer was a poacher on a grand scale. Doubtless the sportsman fitted out by Abercrombie & Fitch is less destructive than his pioneering predecessors, but there are still many Americans who rely upon hunting and fishing as a means of subsistence. Particularly in periods of economic depression is the man who is little better than a squatter driven to live off the land.

Apart from the commercial interest in the taking of game, this has been one of the chief reasons for the highly unrealistic approach of the American legislator to the game problem. To pass really effective laws would have been to antagonize a large part of the population. Nevertheless, it was imperative, at the least, to make the gesture, so the solons proceeded largely against fanciful and all but imaginary dangers. It was pretended that game had great economic importance, whereas actually the chief reason for its preservation is sentimental. Chemicals, for instance, are far more effective than any insectivorous birds in the protection of crops. Even when necessary laws were passed, there was no machinery created for enforcing them. Today fifty or a hundred wardens (sometimes assisted by honorary deputy wardens) patrol States where more than a quarter of a million hunting and fishing licenses are issued annually.

Six to seven million hunting licenses are now issued in the United States every year. New York and Pennsylvania issue more than half a million and many other States more than a quarter of a million. But the number of prosecutions is negligible. Thus in New York there were but 6,978 cases in 1932, when 579,132 licenses were issued. Even if it be assumed that all the arrests resulted in convictions (prosecutions under the game laws, in fact, are successful generally in over 90% of the

cases) this would make the convictions only slightly over 1% of the licenses. In other States the percentage runs from one-third to one-half of 1%.

Taking the field without a license is the most common offense under the game laws. This is due partly to ignorance of the license requirements, which are still comparatively recent, and partly to the fact that the poorer hunters are in no position to afford even the few dollars demanded. The percentage of license violations in relation to the total number of convictions runs from lows of 20% to highs of 75%. In Indiana it was 31.2% in 1930, 34.9% in 1931, and 41.6% in 1932.

These figures bear an interesting correspondence to the curve of the Depression. Apparently some of the ten or twelve million unemployed kept themselves from starvation by living on God's bounty. Judges were lenient during this period, suspending many sentences.

Very few States itemize the character of the violations. But from such figures as are available it may be surmised that the next most frequent violations are for hunting or fishing during closed seasons, or on Sunday. The fewest violations are for hunting or fishing in prohibited ways, or for taking prohibited fish or game. The game laws are least effective here.

# THE SPECIAL DAY

BY MARTHA VANSANT

LIKE many Southern children of those times, I lived in two worlds, the one shared with parents and the other explored and gazed at in the company of servants. Each world expected me to know almost nothing of the other; each warned me not to confide my experiences in it to the other; both trained me in secrecy.

At that time we lived in Florida. It was not the Florida of Palm Beach and the other resorts, for they were only beginning settlements then. Small steamers loaded fruit from splintery wharfs, and the sea teemed with fish up to the shore-line. A few hotels with tropical gardens took care of the somewhat rare wealthy people who came down for a season of fishing in mid-Winter; the rest of us lived in frame cottages, and got about from town to town on high-banked shell roads lifted above malarial swamps full of flowers.

Chain-gangs of convicts were always at work on these roads. Near where they worked we used to see, at the side of the trail, the square, barred cages in which we were told they spent their nights, one man to a cage, separated to prevent any concerted outbreak for freedom. As the roads grew the cages were loaded on to mule-drawn sledges and shifted to new sites. We saw all this only at such times as we moved from one town to another, always very laboriously, our high awkward motor-car rocking precariously over the new-made fills, and bogging now and then.

At first we did our moving with that one car, but after a while, as the family grew, another became necessary and was hired for the occasion. The same thing happened with our nurses: we had a permanent one who went with us everywhere, and after a while a second one who was picked up temporarily in whatever town we happened to settle in. It was the second nurses who were the most interesting to me, for they always showed me strange sights.

Most particularly, there was Leeta. I do not know the name of the place we were in when we found her, but I remember her for the way she was always taking me on walks in the afternoon. Leeta was a respectable colored woman of about thirty, whose life seemed to be wrapped up in the affairs of her church. With her as guide, I saw all the back quarters of her Florida town. She never followed the beaten track of nurses to the palm-shaded hotel gardens, with their set flower-beds and prim little girls to play with. Instead she took me, and sometimes a brother or two, along the river-bank to a group of Negro fishing-huts, where we waded in the water while she talked to her friends. My youngest brother would be wheeled in his baby-carriage, sleeping most of the way.

Someone in the family must have found out where we went and ordered Leeta to go somewhere else, for presently she changed and began to take us across the

two business streets that ran parallel with the river, and up on to the highroad that led along the more stylish Negro quarter and disappeared in the direction of the next town. That town lay off toward the south, beyond the stretch of bare fields growing with wild phlox and sandspurs, and beyond the wall of tropical forest that made a dark line at the further side of the fields. Out of the forest came holly at Christmas, and mysterious scarlet orchids at other times of the year, when Leeta's friends were ambitious enough to bring them to her as gifts. I always wanted to go there, but Leeta said it was too far.

## II

Leeta and I, and my youngest brother in his baby-carriage, became a familiar group in the dark quarter. We were allowed inside the church and saw the brothers and sisters of the congregation rolling upon the floor in their pious frenzy, and we sat enthralled at the dramatics of the black preacher, who could give a far better description of Hell than any I have heard since. It was in this church that I learned about the Special Days, when his preaching was said to be particularly eloquent. On Special Days he was out to make converts.

At last Leeta tired of the Negro quarter, or perhaps was forbidden to stop there, for she began to take us through it and beyond. I hoped then that we might get to the forest, but instead we trudged along through the deep sand, in the sun, and then veered off along a narrow road that led to a dark pile in the middle of the fields. It turned out to be made of road-camp prison cages, and Leeta told me, after new pledges of secrecy, that it was the jail. Not the regular jail, of course, for that was in town, but a temporary estab-

lishment used to take care of an overflow of business.

It was a horrible place. I had never seen the cages with anyone in them until then, and here there was a man in every one. They were piled up on top of one another, and the men in the top ones had only bars to stand on, and were lucky if someone had given them a plank to use as a floor. Each cage had a bench in it that served as bed and table and chair, and a metal pitcher of water. The whole place stank.

I hated to go there from the first, but Leeta loved to, for she had friends in the cages. She would have gone there every day if she could, wheeling my youngest brother in his baby-carriage all the miles out through the hot sun; but she never could go unless she had me along to mind the baby while she went to talk to her friends. I was sworn to secrecy every time we went, so the family never knew. It never occurred to me to break my oath and so escape having to go. It seemed a matter to be settled with Leeta, not with the family. But I hated the place so much that finally I made up my mind. I would not go again; and I told Leeta so.

"Just one more time," she said. "Just this Thursday. I have to go out there Thursday, but don't you let on."

"I won't," I said, "if it's really the last time. But if you ask me even once more after Thursday, I won't go. There are other walks we can take just as well."

Thursday turned out to be a blazing day, but really no worse than the other days on which we had made the trip. The baby-carriage with my sleeping brother in it moved heavily through the sand, and slowly I tramped along beside. It was too hot to talk, or to pick flowers. Even the men off there in their cages couldn't have been hotter than we were, and at least they weren't dusty.

We moved along slowly. Usually the road was empty, but now I noticed that for once we were not alone. Small knots of people were ahead of us, and more were coming up behind. I saw far ahead that every one turned into the road which led off the highway toward the cages.

"Why are there so many people?" I asked Leeta.

"They're going out there like me," she said. "This is a Special Day."

A day of preaching, then, to convert the sinners in the cages. No doubt the preacher from the colored church would hold a service for the prisoners and their friends. As we got nearer, and joined the gathering crowd, I saw that a sort of booth had been erected quite high up, near the cages; it was a small platform on four tall posts, and it had a railing around the top, and a ladder up behind, and a beam for an awning overhead. Obviously, the preaching stand.

Leeta drew the baby-carriage up to one side of the path, at a little distance from the booth. We couldn't get much nearer on account of the numbers of colored people gathering below the platform. Now and then a white man, perspiring in his shirt and trousers, would walk in a circle below the booth, pushing back the Negroes. They stepped back quietly because he was white and wore a sheriff's badge. He seemed exasperated by the number of people that kept coming up.

"I don't know what business you've got here," he shouted. "Nobody told you you could come. But it's too late to stop you now, and maybe the sight'll put the fear of God into you. Get back there."

Leeta disappeared in the crowd. At first I could follow her with my eyes, by the blue and white dress she wore; but she was small and soon she disappeared behind the taller colored people. Nobody

paid the least attention to my brother or me, but walked straight by. My brother blinked his eyes and raised himself up at the sound of so many voices; but it was so hot that he soon lay back and went to sleep again, and I sat down in the grass. Sandspurs grew everywhere, and I had to pull up bunches of them to clear a place to sit on. I didn't mind waiting because there were all the people to watch, and they seemed to be excited. They whispered to each other nervously. Pretty soon, if the preacher was any good, I knew he would have them clinging together, and swaying, and breaking out in shouts of "Praise the Lord!" Only I did hope they'd hurry and begin, because it was getting hotter and hotter.

The voices murmured together, and the hot wind blew over us, bringing from the cages an almost overpowering smell. I began to feel dizzy, and wondered whether it would be possible to find Leeta and make her go home before the preaching began. But she was too clever to show herself, and I knew I shouldn't see her again till she'd heard what she came to hear.

In a little while the crowd grew more compact. The bright variegated colors of turbans and dresses, the orange and magenta and blue that Negro women wore in those days, drew into a tight mass, the colors coming out sharply against the rusty blue and black of the men in their best clothes. There was a continuous chatter of low voices.

Then all at once the murmuring and moving stopped. In the complete silence a cicada screeched through the sunny air. Everybody had turned one way, facing the booth and the cages. The footsteps of late-comers running up from the road thumped behind us. The sheriff's voice was clear. "Get back! Get back!" he commanded, and forced the crowd away from him.



## III

From behind the cages somewhere two white men appeared, holding a third man, a Negro, between them. They were lifting and pulling him; his feet trailed along the ground, and small clouds of dust hung in the grass behind him. His shaven head leaned to the side, and his mouth was open. He was a young Negro, dressed in blue. He slumped between the two white men, scrambling with his feet and then dropping limply again.

They reached the back of the platform, where the ladder was, and stopped. Other white men closed in around them.

Then from somewhere the colored clergyman appeared; I could tell him by his long black coat. The young Negro, I felt sure, was a sinner he was going to save, a sinner who didn't want to be saved, and who was holding back with all his strength. But there were too many against him, and they would force him.

The men below the platform were shouting and arguing about something. There was an interrupted sound, loud and hollow, like a clergyman praying; and the group came apart at last. The same two white men had the Negro between them, and were pushing him up the ladder now, and going up themselves. The Negro fought and struggled, but they were stronger, and they soon had him up, and all three emerged in the booth.

They stood there a moment, the three together, and the white men seemed to be trying to make the Negro stand up. They had him by the shoulders, but then, all of a sudden, they stepped back. I saw a rope dangling down loosely from the beam overhead where the awning should have been; and at that instant the floor fell out of the platform.

A terrible shriek went up from the crowd. The two white men were still up above, but the Negro had dropped down through the open space between them, and swung by his head from the rope, and writhed, and kicked, and wriggled horribly. Then his body became still, and began to swing back and forth, hanging from the tilted head, with the tongue rolling out, and the eyes white, staring wide open.

Moans and shrieks went up from the crowd, and voices yelled "O my God!" and "Lord save us!". Then I heard a sharp, broken cry: "Sam! Sam!"

The man with the sheriff's badge came running out, pushing back and scattering the people.

"Get out of here!" he shouted. "Every one of you! You had no business here in the first place. Get out! And don't none of you come back here no more to see your friends, if you know what's good for you!"

Some of them were already running back toward the road, holding brown arms across their eyes. The rest broke apart in small groups, straggling off across the grass.

I don't know where Leeta came from, but I saw her standing beside the baby-carriage looking at my sleeping brother. Sweat streaked her neck, and her forehead was glistening. She came up to me and grabbed me by both hands. She put her face close to mine, and her voice came out in gasps.

"If you ever tell what you seen —! If you ever tell —! There ain't no end to what'll happen, mark what I say, if you ever let on to your folks! You understand!"

I was too horrified to move, or to say anything.

But I never told; not for twenty years.

# EUPHORIA

BY CARTER BROOKE JONES

IT SURE felt good to be in bed. There were other beds in the room, a whole row of them, but that was all right. He was too tired to look around much.

Darkness was coming on, and somebody turned on a few dim lights in corners of the ward. He could hear the wind wailing outdoors. The slush would freeze over tonight sure. That's what the old fellow at the soup-kitchen had said.

The nurse leaned over him. She was young—a good-looker.

"How do you feel?"

"Pretty well, ma'm, I guess. I don't hardly know."

She touched his forehead. She took his temperature, but when she looked at the thermometer she didn't say a word—she wrote on a long sheet that hung from a clip at the foot of his cot.

A little later she came back. He was half asleep, but she roused him to ask a question.

"Do your folks know you're sick?"

"No'm." He turned his head away, as if to drop the subject.

"Where do they live?"

"They . . . I don't know."

It was the truth—he didn't. The only letter he'd written—a year ago—had come back marked *present address unknown*. He'd waited in that town for an answer.

"Sure you don't?"

"Honest I don't. I've lost track of 'em."

"Where did they used to live?"

He told her.

"And you're sure they're not there any more?"

He explained about the letter. She moved away uncertainly. She came back and asked softly: "How long have you been away from home?"

"Over three years."

"Your name's Chet, isn't it, and you're nineteen?"

"Yes, ma'm. How did you know?"

"You told the admission clerk downstairs when those men brought you over."

Of course. How dumb he was getting!

She went to another cot. He felt hotter and hotter. And outside it was turning colder and colder.

She returned, finally, and gave him some medicine. It was bitter. He was to go straight to sleep, she said. But about that time the doctor came and felt his pulse and listened to his chest and talked in a low tone to the nurse. They both went away.

The bed felt swell. It was so miserable outdoors—all that slush. He didn't feel exactly sick: he was just kind of feverish. They should have let him stay another night at the municipal lodging-house, instead of hustling him over here. He'd be O.K. tomorrow. Just a cold.

But it was nice to be here. That municipal joint was crowded, and there were no sheets, and the blankets were stiff and scratchy, not soft like these, and the old barn of a room was ratty and lousy, and the men smelled bad and snored and mut-

tered; you couldn't sleep much. All flophouses were alike.

They seemed to think he was pretty sick, but he wasn't. Why, he was feeling better all the time. His chest felt sort of funny, and he had a touch of fever, but he'd kept going on lots worse. There was no pain. He'd clear out in the morning and go places. But it was swell to sleep in a real bed again, with sheets and pillow-case and everything.

He sure was hot, though. Hotter all the time. But the hotter he got the better he felt. It didn't add up, but it was a fact. He wouldn't have believed you could have fever and still feel simply swell.

Everything was grand. Gorgeous. He felt as light as if he could float away. And he didn't give a whoop in Hell what happened.

Reverend Baker had said that time when he saved him from going to reform school: "Chet, you can make anything out of yourself you want to."

Hooley, he'd said to himself, but it was true: he could. Old Preach wasn't a bad guy at all. He was right too. A fellow could do anything he wanted if he just made up his mind and stuck to it. Other birds had. Why couldn't he? No reason at all. He could be rich and famous. He'd step out and show 'em all.

It was hot as the hinges. He threw off the last thin blanket.

Maybe he'd be a prize-fighter. He was strong enough. He could learn to box. He knew something about it already. He was just the build: slim, not too tall.

He'd return a champion. Would Haynesville sit up and take notice or wouldn't it! Even old Weatherby, who had jugged him for swiping that tire, would be proud to shake his hand. The whole town would. Dad would be proud. Mother would be horrified at first, but

she'd end up being proud too . . . But he'd forgotten: the folks were not there. Where were they? No matter: he'd find them.

He'd get off the platform of the East-West Limited and wave to the crowd, like champions did in the newsreels. He'd be lousy with money. Tens, twenties, fifties, in a wad. He'd peel off a twenty and toss it to the porter. He'd be wearing one of those thick tweed suits like he'd seen Jack Dempsey have on one time. Old Mayor Smith would rush up and shake hands and make a speech, like he always did when celebrities visited Haynesville.

Jean would be in the crowd. She wouldn't play him against some other guy and try to make a fool out of him—not much: she'd take it as a great honor to be seen with him. But maybe he'd high-hat her, give her some of her own medicine. Jane Stiles and Mary Hodgson and all the girls would throw themselves at a champ. But maybe he'd give them all the run-around, and go out to Hollywood and grab off a movie star. Why not?

But if he turned fighter, he'd have to be a lightweight. He didn't weigh over 130, even when he had plenty to eat. Well, there was honor and jack enough in being lightweight champ. And he might fill out and become a welter or a middleweight—maybe even a heavyweight. At nineteen you couldn't tell.

Still, it was a tough game. Suppose he didn't cop off any title. What then? Maybe he'd go into business instead. Start in at some big factory and work up to be president. But that took so hellish long. Why not invent something? Or go into Wall Street and clean up? Oh, he'd show 'em, one way or another. Maybe he'd be a big aviator . . .

He could hear the wind. It went whoooooo, and rattled the windows. Blow-

ing up to freeze the slush. Was he lucky to be out of it!

"You must go to sleep." The nurse stood over him again. "How do you feel now?" She reminded him a little of Jean.

"Like a million dollars," he said.

But she didn't seem to believe it. She fluttered over him anxiously. She didn't understand how wonderful a fellow could feel. She thought that because he had some fever he was sick. Why, he could walk twenty miles or lick a wildcat. But he didn't tell her. It would sound too goofy.

## II

Mother was making a cake. After she'd poured on the icing, he grabbed the pan and licked it with a spoon. It sure was good.

"You're a sight," she said.

She was looking a little old. Not so very old, though. Just like she was getting along. Her hair was gray, but there was no white in it.

Dad walked in, dusting off his clothes with his hands, dusting off damp scraps of shavings from the sawmill. He didn't say much. But then he never did.

All of a sudden Chet was somewhere else. It was early Spring, just warm enough to enjoy the sun, and he was stretched out on his back in a patch of thick weeds, which smelled good. It was nice to lie there and look up at the sky and watch clouds drift across, planning what you'd do when you grew up. But he was already grown up, wasn't he?

Somebody leaned over him. It was Jean. But she wasn't indifferent, like she generally was. She wasn't smiling in that superior way that made you feel like socking her. She was serious. What had come over her? He'd never seen her like that.

She patted his cheek. The first thing he knew he had pulled her head down and kissed her.

"You know, Chet," she said, "I've loved you all along. I only made out I didn't care to rag you. I didn't mean it. Can you forgive me?"

Could he! He hugged her. But she slipped out of his arms and faded away, and he was alone. Everything was all the time doing a fadeout like scenes in the movies. He was just dreaming, of course, but it wasn't like ordinary dreams, because every now and then, in the middle of seeing something, he'd realize he was lying on the hospital cot. How could you be one place and see yourself somewhere else maybe a thousand miles away? He gave it up.

It was Winter back home, and he was out tobogganing with a bunch of kids. Jean was along, but she wasn't grown up. She was just a little girl wearing a brownie cap. She was always tagging along, getting in the way. A tad like her shouldn't be around bothering big husky boys.

He was back on the cot. Somebody in the next bed was moaning softly. He was cold. A while ago he'd been burning up. But now he was cold. He tried to call the nurse to bring him more covers, but he couldn't make a sound.

Things were sort of blurred from then on—places and people and talk. You couldn't tell, half the time, whether they were real or not.

There'd be Mother in the kitchen, and maybe his baby sister and his older brother, Dan. He could see the pots and pans hanging where they always had and the big coal scuttle by the range. Then the nurse would walk in, wearing her white dress and cap, and start helping Mother with the dinner, just as calm as

if she belonged there. It couldn't be right: the nurse had nothing to do with Haynesville.

Then, to make it all the crazier, he'd be in the hospital bed, in this strange city, which he'd never seen until a couple of days before he keeled over like a baby in the soup-kitchen, and he'd see the nurse and maybe the doctor moving around, and then Mother, or maybe Dad, or maybe both of them, would walk right into the ward and stand over him. There was no sense in that. They didn't know where in hell he was.

But once he looked up with his head clear, though he couldn't have lifted it to save him. He wasn't in the ward any more: he was in a little room all to himself. It wasn't just one of his goofy ideas, either. It was a fact.

The nurse was there and the doctor too, and there was another guy with grayish hair and glasses he wore on a black cord—most likely another doctor. And none of them pulled a fade-out or turned into somebody else. For a little while everything was just as real as you could want.

He could understand what they were saying. He'd have joined in the talk, because it was about him, but he couldn't seem to say a word. It was just like in nightmares when something was after you and you wanted to yell for help and couldn't make a sound. Only this was no dream, he'd bet a million dollars. They talked on, thinking he couldn't understand.

"I tried to find out when he first came, but he said he didn't know where to reach his folks. Said the last time he wrote the letter came back. I believed him."

"But somebody else in his home town . . ."

"I guess I should have . . ."

"Sure, somebody would know where his folks were."

"No use bothering now. Either . . ."

"Listen, son, don't you . . ."

"It's no use, doctor, he can't understand."

"I'd swear he was staring straight at me a while ago."

"Coma of a sort just the same, doctor."

"Oxygen . . ."

He knew what oxygen was.  $H_2O$ . Sure. He closed his eyes. Somebody stuck something in his arm. It hurt a little.

His eyelids were so heavy he couldn't push them open again. Sleep was what he needed.

### III

He was burning up again. It was hours later. Maybe days. How could you tell? Jean was waiting on him. He'd known all along that she'd come when he needed her. She sat on the side of the bed and held his hand. God, but it was hot! Why didn't somebody open a window? She leaned over and kissed his forehead. It must have burned her lips.

Then she changed into the nurse. You couldn't depend on anything. Everything was jumbled up like a jig-saw puzzle. If he could put the pieces together he'd have a clear picture. But it was too much trouble. It didn't matter anyway.

Another blank space. Then somebody was holding his wrist, and he could hear a watch ticking close to his ear. Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick. It grew louder and louder. TICK - TICK - TICK - TICK - TICK. It ticked like a sledge-hammer.

With a great effort, he sat up, but an arm pushed him down. No use struggling. Too weak.

He opened his eyes. A new nurse was there. A homely one, with thick glasses.

He started to ask her where his nurse was, but decided not to. The poor girl couldn't work all the time. This was her relief. She'd be back. And, sure enough, the next time he opened his eyes, she was there.

He drifted back to sleep, but there was no rest for him. He wandered and wandered, yet he couldn't seem to get anywhere: he kept coming back to the same place—the water-tank just outside Haynesville.

He'd started out from home at the water-tank, late one night. It was a wonderful night in mid-Summer, with the stars all out, and the insects loud in the brush. He had been with Jean that night.

"I like you, Chet," she said, "but you're not the only pebble on the beach, and you needn't try to tell me what to do. I guess I'll go with all the boys I want to."

He said, "Suits me," and walked off. He didn't tell Jean he was leaving. He didn't tell Mother or any one. What was the use? They'd find out.

He hadn't left on account of Jean. She didn't matter so much. Hell, no. He was fed up—with everything. Dad wanted him to go to work in the sawmill. Not for him! He'd be a pug or something.

He waited two hours at the water-tank. It was around midnight when he got there. While he was waiting the moon climbed high and made it almost like day. The crickets and things beside the track kept up their racket, and it sounded kind of lonesome and pretty.

Then at last he heard a scraping sound in the distance. It scrape-scraped along louder and louder. The big white light covered the tank. It was sort of scary. The freight roared up and crunched to a stop, with the engine in front of the tank. It stood panting and took on water.

He was hiding in the weeds, and when

the train lurched forward, jerking and buckling, he hopped into a gondola. The train caught up speed, and the faint lights of Haynesville disappeared. You could sort of taste the night, and above the clinkety-clink, you could still hear the insects beside the track. It made you kind of sad to realize that every minute was taking you farther away, and at the same time you were excited and sort of in a glow thinking of the adventures you'd have and how nice it would be not to have anybody bother you and tell you what to do . . .

He woke up shivering. The pretty nurse seemed to know he was cold, though he hadn't said a word, and she piled more blankets on him. He thought he'd never get warm. But finally he did. He got warmer and warmer. Hot. He couldn't stay awake. He dreamed that old Meisner had shut him up in one of the huge ovens of the Haynesville bakery. He tried with all his might to get out. The iron door gave at last, and he tumbled out—awake.

He was half hot, half cold—a miserable, squirmy feeling. The girl—she was hardly any older than Jean would be now—held something to his lips. He swallowed: he'd do anything she wanted. Whiskey. It was a stiff jolt, and it made him feel good. He began to do some more planning—things he'd do when he got well. If you were ever going to be rich and famous, you had to make a start. There were so many ways a fellow could succeed. He might. . .

There were more dreams, or whatever you wanted to call them. A girl stood with her back to him. Suddenly she turned and threw her arms around him. He had thought she was Jean, but she wasn't: she was the nurse.

One morning, ages and ages afterward, he looked up, and everything had settled



back to normal, and the dreams and crazy notions were all gone. He was so weak he could hardly move, but everything was plain and flat and real. Nothing shook or got dim, and nothing turned into anything else.

He was still in the private room. How did he rate that? It didn't matter.

The nurse bustled in directly. She sure was pretty—he hadn't imagined that. He wanted to take her hand and thank her for all she'd done—look straight into her eyes and make a nice little speech, like they did in the movies. But he couldn't seem to say a word.

She was the one that spoke, and it was his hand that she caught hold of. "You feel better, don't you?"

"Yes'm—lots."

He felt his face flush. There was so much he wanted to say, but it all stayed bottled up in him, and he could only lie there and stare at her and smile a little.

She took his temperature and told him that it was normal and he would soon be all right. Then she bustled out.

He expected it to be Spring at least, maybe Summer, but he discovered that there was still snow on the poplar in front of the window. It was powdered like a Christmas tree—the kind they used to have at the Baptist Sunday-school entertainments.

He closed his eyes, and tried to do some more planning. But everything was sort of stale.

#### IV

He had been sitting up, and eating everything in sight—getting strong—and one day they brought him his clothes: frayed woolen shirt, grimy sweater, khaki trousers, woolen socks with the toes out, army shoes in pretty good shape.

He had a hard time finding the nurse. There were other nurses around, but he didn't know her name—he'd never thought to ask it—and he didn't want to admit that. He went from floor to floor, looking into wards, watching corridors.

Finally, outside the emergency clinic on the first floor, she came into sight. She was just coming on duty, and she wore a heavy coat over her uniform.

She held out her hand, smiling. "Why, Chet. Leaving us? We'll miss you. I'm so glad to see you well again. Take good care of yourself."

"I—I sure do thank you." He wanted to ask her name, but he was afraid she'd be hurt to think he didn't know it. "I appreciate a lot . . . all you done for me."

She laughed in her friendly way. "It was a pleasure, Chet. You're a lucky boy. You know you had pneumonia bad. We didn't think you'd pull through, but you surprised us. You must hunt up Dr. Davison and thank him too. He's the chief resident physician, and he gave you a lot of time."

They shook hands again. He wanted to suggest that maybe they'd meet again some day. There was a lot he'd like to have said, but somehow he couldn't. He just squeezed her hand, and said good-bye. Then he went to Dr. Davison's office.

He thanked the doctor—a middle-aged man with a hearty manner.

"Well, son, you're lucky to be going out of here under your own steam. You had us worried." They shook hands.

He found one of the entrances, and pushed open the big door, and went down some steps. His legs felt funny, like they belonged to somebody else.

The snow had been melting, and the streets were slushy, but it was turning cold again. The wind nipped his ears. It was blowing up to freeze over tonight.

So they'd been worried about him. It seemed funny for anybody in a city hospital to worry over anybody: they got so many people sick and hurt and all and had so many die on them. Most likely the doctor had just said that to be nice. But he'd bet the nurse had worried. She was that sort. It would make her feel bad if a fellow didn't get well. He was lucky all right.

The sloshy snow looked as if coal-dust had been sifted over it. He passed a row

of mean little shops. He stopped in front of a pawnshop and studied the assortment in the window. He moved on. The wind was mighty cold.

At the next corner two streets cut through at angles. There were three ways you could go. Well, it didn't matter. He chose the street that slanted off to the right.

Blowing on his hands, he shoved them back in his trousers pockets and squashed on through the slush.

# THE SOAP-BOX

## STREAMLINE

I CANNOT restrain an impulse to comment on Mr. Daniel C. Sayre's article on automobile design—streamlining—in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* for October.

Mr. Sayre pictures a completely streamlined car with the motor in the rear, steering by a rear wheel which also does the driving. One would gather from reading Mr. Sayre's article that the world only waits the plucking up of sufficient courage by some automobile manufacturer sufficiently confident of its following or sufficiently desperate to try anything, and we will be presented with means of driving at 100 miles an hour with the safety of the present 60 miles, and one-half the fuel.

By a certain gentleman high up in aviation (whom I may not quote) I am told that a completely streamline form, traveling at 100 miles an hour near the ground, is likely to exhibit a tendency to leap into the air or sail off to one side of its path.

As to the motor in the rear, I hear aviators object to that location on planes because in a wreck the motor, being a small concentrated mass, comes flying forward through the wreckage, killing the passengers.

As to steering with the rear wheel, I may quote an amateur who constructed a three-wheel car, so steered, in England. He says: "The trouble with rear wheel steering is that when you want to swerve to give a passing car more road, you do not, as in the front wheel steering car, swerve the front away from it, but you swerve the rear *closer* to it."

I presume this difficulty accounts for the dents I saw in Mr. Buckmaster Fuller's revolutionary car.

For mechanical reasons I cannot see why Mr. Sayre suggests driving and steering with the rear wheel, as the combining of these two functions on a single axle presents mechanical difficulties which should be enough to rule it out.

Most successful engineering proceeds by steps, not by great plunges. Automotive engineering, to which the public reaction to appearance presents additional difficulties, and which is already burdened with the heavy capital requirements of mass production, must proceed even more slowly.

The public seriously objects to being experimented upon, hence the engineer naturally hesitates to try experiments which might lead to the death of customers. I therefore see in the action of the automobile manufacturers only good logic. They are just getting us used to the appearance of streamlined cars, which may develop into some real streamlining later.

*Montchanin, Del.* E. PAUL DU PONT

*Member of the Society of  
Automotive Engineers*

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## JOB FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS

THE great problem of psychology, during the next fifty years, will be to account for the fact that presumably rational beings once believed in some of the psychologies prevailing today.

*Utica, N. Y.* A REFORMED PSYCHOLOGIST

POLITE PROTEST FROM  
AN ENGLISHMAN

THE AMERICAN MERCURY for July contains an article by Hamilton Butler on "The Anglo-American Love Affair". I am more surprised than insulted to find such an article in a journal of your previous high reputation. Hamilton Butler, who has obviously never seen Europe (if he *has* been here, he kept his eyes and ears shut, and mouth open), has descended to mere yellow-press filthy abuse.

I do not wish to open a controversy on the political lies in his article, as they involve the whole history of America and Europe. I do feel that many of your readers will be as sorry as I am that your pages should have been soiled by a muck-raker who has risen to stupendous heights of distortion, misrepresentation of fact, spiteful, unjustified calumny, and hatred.

I would like to ask your correspondent the following: Who are the Americans, anyway? Are they not the exported and deported inhabitants of England and Europe, who, through personal weakness or by failing to adapt themselves to their environment, fled from sinking Europe? Have they, therefore, not only the faults, virtues and vices of the best Europeans, but the failings of the less able English, to which group their ancestors belonged?

Were I of Hamilton Butler's calibre, I should suggest that the United States is peopled with the scum of Europe, who were too poor in character to survive in the struggle for a place in the sun.

Instead of coming down to his level of deliberate lying, calculated to rouse patriotic feeling, I merely suggest that there is very little difference between most human beings, whether they be red, brown, black, yellow, white or American. There is particularly little difference between the hu-

man being in England and in America, and I protest against Hamilton Butler's attempt, by journalistic, patriotism-inflaming, racial bunk, to assert that the English are a nation of crooks and twisters, whilst the Americans are a nation of perfect human beings, honest, gentle, and snow-white in business purity.

I sincerely hope that there are no more Hamilton Butlers in your country. If there are, then God help America, and Christ have mercy upon disrupted, disunited, torn, twisted, tormented, battered, broken, bankrupt Europe.

I have just shewn this letter to one of your countrymen in London. I have bet him five dollars that you haven't the guts to print it in the Soap-Box.

ALAN ROY KING

*Royal College of Science  
London, S.W. 7  
England*

OVERWORKED  
COUNTER-WORDS

AN Amateur Lexicographer, whose letter appears on page 247 of THE AMERICAN MERCURY for October, is a man after my own heart.

There are fads in words as in other things, and I have been amused to note the rather appalling extent to which advertising copy writers and the editorial writers on some of our flip magazines have descended upon the words *casual* and *unpredictable*. If ever there were a couple of faddy words, these are them.

A clever copy writer on one of the swankier women's magazines told me they have an unwritten rule in the office that when they didn't know what else to say about a thing by way of appraisal they find safety in the word *amusing*.

*North Cohocton, N. Y.* ROSCOE PEACOCK

## TOO MANY LAWMAKERS

IN THE March, 1933, issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, I note Mr. Oliver Jenkin's staggering statement that the State of New Hampshire, with a population of less than half a million, has a Legislature of 442 members.

In Ontario the Legislative Assembly at present consists of 112 members. Under the provisions of the Representation Act, 1933, which it is expected will come into force about the middle of next year, this number has been reduced to ninety. Notwithstanding this measure, there are many people who still feel that the Province is burdened with a superfluity of legislators. And Ontario has a population of three million!

Toronto

C. H. R. HENDERSON

## NOTE ON BANKERS

WHAT we need in this country is less hope and more cynicism. Cynicism, of course, will win in the long run, but at the present moment it seems to be in eclipse. You will find plenty of it in every proverb, for proverbs embody the concentrated wisdom of the human race.

The world is always being got into trouble by optimists, and got out of it by cynics. Today, in almost every town of the United States, some bank run by men full of optimism is in the hands of conservators, with long files of depositors waiting for their money. And almost everywhere those depositors pin their hopes to other bankers who are hard-boiled and cynical fellows.

E. W. Howe is fond of saying that the best citizen of every town is the meanest banker in it. This is not because Howe enjoys meanness *per se*, but because he knows its value in dollars and cents. A mean banker seems a — to optimists who try to borrow money from him, but he never

makes the mistake of confusing optimism and negotiable securities, and so he always pays his depositors in full.

Chicago

A SQUEEZED DEPOSITOR

## QUERIES

68. MUSIC.—I read recently that Sidney Lanier once remarked that "music is love in search of a word." Is this quotation to be found in any of his books? If so, precisely where?

Eugene, Ore.

O. P. KOENIG

69. ZEUGMA.—For ten years I have been trying to find out what a zeugma is. I have examined all the dictionaries in my town, but they have only made my plight worse. Can anybody help me?

Chicago

R. L. BURNS

## REPLIES

45. THE ELECTRIC CHAIR.—It was reported by the Associated Press on January 13, 1928, that the electric current was released three successive times into the body of Mrs. Snyder; while in the case of her accomplice Gray only two applications were used. It would reasonably appear that the first job presented some difficulties, and that the technique was improved in the second. It was such a report that I had in mind when in my article I referred to the Snyder case. [THE AMERICAN MERCURY, May, 1933, p. 91.] How much pain was involved is difficult to say. This kind of operation destroys the only competent witness. *Requiescat in pace*. Among the living, one opinion is as good as another.

Reno, Nev.

ANTHONY M. TURANO

46. THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION.—If Mr. Allen will go to the public library in Akron he will probably find a good translation of the Soviet Constitution. If it is not there, I suggest that he write to the Daily Worker Publishing Company, 1113 West Washington street, Chicago. For less than fifty cents he will get a good translation (more or less official, since the company is a Communist organization), and also five or six leaflets of comment upon it by such authorities as Rykov, Lunacharsky, and Bucharin.

Oxford, Miss.

VERDI

47. BEETHOVEN AS A CRITIC.—“Oh, you arch ass! Double ass!” wrote Beethoven upon the margin of a copy of the *Cäcilia* journal in 1825, opposite an article written by Gottfried Weber, attacking Mozart’s Requiem. This information is to be found on page 235, Vol. III of Thayer’s “Life of Beethoven.” In all the ten books on Beethoven that I have read in the past month, the quotation above is the nearest I have found to the one printed in your query. The original German is not given, but it probably is to be found in the German edition of Thayer’s work. *Ass* seems to have been Beethoven’s favorite household epithet.

*Van Nuys, Calif.* THELMA WAGNER

49. NEGRO POPE.—I quote from “A History of the Popes,” by De Cormenin, Philadelphia, 1846:

Saint Victor, the fifteenth Pope, A.D. 194. Victor was an African by birth, the son of one Felix. (p. 31).

Melchhiades, the thirty-third Pope. Melchhiades, the new Pontiff, was an African. (p. 54).

*Windsor, Ontario* GEO. F. WARLOW

55. THE POTENCY OF BEER.—The following list may answer the inquiry in THE AMERICAN MERCURY for September issue regarding the alcoholic content of beers prior to Prohibition. The statistics are furnished by the National Brewers’ Academy and Philip Driesbach, both of New York.

*Ypsilanti, Mich.* FRED S. MALLETT

| Brewery                    | Brand           | Alcohol<br>by<br>weight |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| American—Cabinet           |                 | 3.92                    |
| do.                        | Old Style Lager | 3.60                    |
| Bartholomay—Rienzi         |                 | 4.38                    |
| do.                        | Apollo          | 3.94                    |
| Bergner & Engel—Tannhäuser |                 | 3.58                    |
| Blatz—Wiener               |                 | 3.77                    |
| do.                        | Export          | 3.62                    |
| do.                        | Private Stock   | 3.77                    |
| do.                        | Münchener       | 3.54                    |
| Clauser-Flanigan—Champagne |                 | 3.72                    |
| Cream City—A-1 Cream       |                 | 3.37                    |
| do.                        | Pilsner         | 3.33                    |
| do.                        | Edelbräu        | 4.04                    |
| do.                        | Extra Stock     | 3.40                    |
| George Ehret—Ehret Extra   |                 | 3.40                    |
| Evarard—Red Star Export    |                 | 3.73                    |
| Jos. Fallert—Superb Export |                 | 3.37                    |
| do.                        | Alt Bayrisch    | 3.38                    |
| Genosce—Liebstoschaner     |                 | 3.76                    |

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Gettleman—Pride                  | 3.31 |
| do. Natural                      | 3.62 |
| do. Best                         | 3.44 |
| Geo. Günther, Jr.—White and Gold | 3.59 |
| Jos. Hensler—Popular             | 3.80 |
| Jung—Pilsner                     | 2.86 |
| do. Jung Bräu                    | 4.20 |
| do. Cardinal                     | 3.17 |
| Lion Brewery—Pilsner             | 3.94 |
| do. Lager                        | 3.46 |
| do. Würzburger                   | 3.64 |
| Miller—High Life                 | 3.80 |
| do. Buffet                       | 3.87 |
| do. Münchner                     | 3.53 |
| Milwaukee—Pale                   | 3.44 |
| do. (Waukesha)—Club House        | 3.84 |
| do. Health                       | 3.55 |
| do. Extra Brew                   | 3.46 |
| Nassau—Extra Pilsner             | 3.68 |
| Obermeyer & Liebmann—Erlanger    | 3.42 |
| do. Bock                         | 3.82 |
| do. Pilsner Style                | 3.22 |
| Pabst—Blue Ribbon                | 2.93 |
| do. Red, White & Blue            | 2.75 |
| do. Bock                         | 3.42 |
| do. Doppelbräu                   | 2.97 |
| do. Bavarian                     | 2.97 |
| Jacob Ruppert—Extra Lager        | 3.32 |
| do. Knickerbocker                | 3.88 |
| San Francisco—Export Lager       | 4.17 |
| do. Extra Pale                   | 4.30 |
| Schlitz—Export                   | 3.40 |
| do. Pale                         | 3.15 |
| J. F. Trommer—Augustiner         | 4.10 |
| do. Pilsner                      | 3.86 |
| do. Special Pilsner              | 4.10 |
| do. Bavarian                     | 3.52 |
| Anheuser-Busch—Budweiser         | 3.84 |
| Grand Rapids—Silver Foam         | 3.60 |
| Hammond—Mühlhäuser               | 4.59 |
| do. Malt Extract                 | 3.53 |
| Heilemann—Old Style Lager        | 3.46 |
| McAvoy—Alma Mater                | 3.55 |
| do. Club                         | 3.49 |
| Schoenhofen—Edelweiss            | 3.40 |
| do. Select                       | 3.33 |
| Tosetti—Majestic                 | 3.80 |
| do. Bohemian                     | 2.55 |
| Weber—Superb                     | 3.22 |

59. WAR DEBTS.—Mr. Coolidge’s question, “Well, they hired the money, didn’t they?” was addressed to Myron T. Herrick, then Ambassador to France, at a conference at the White House in 1925, during which Herrick, who was violently Francophil, had urged the lenient refunding of the French war debt. No one else was present at the conference, but Herrick was so struck with the question that he passed it on to the White House reporters, who gave it immortality.

*Washington* ONE OF THE REPORTERS



# THE LIBRARY

BY H. L. MENCKEN

## *Hitlerism*

MY BATTLE, by Adolf Hitler; abridged and translated by E. T. S. Dugdale. \$3. 5¼ x 8; 297 pp. Boston: *The Houghton Mifflin Company*.

THE EXPERIMENT WITH DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL EUROPE, by Arnold J. Zurcher. \$2.50. 5¼ x 8; 328 pp. New York: *The Oxford University Press*.

HITLER'S REICH: THE FIRST PHASE, by Hamilton Fish Armstrong. \$1. 5½ x 7¾; 73 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

GERMANY ENTERS THE THIRD REICH, by Calvin B. Hoover. \$2.50. 5¾ x 8¾; 243 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

THE BROWN BOOK OF THE HITLER TERROR AND THE BURNING OF THE REICHSTAG, prepared by the World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism. \$2.50. 5 x 7¾; 348 pp. New York: *Alfred A. Knopf*.

I LIST a few of the first-comers among what promises to be a long procession of Hitler books. We are in for a great flood of them, like the flood of Russian books two or three years ago. At the time these lines are written Hitler has just flung his defiance to the world, and no man can say what his position may be by the time they come into print. On the one hand, he may have forced France and England into something resembling acquiescence in his demands, though they will never, of course, admit categorically that they have yielded; and on the other hand, they may be preparing to dislodge him by force, and have even proceeded to do so. But whatever the issue, it must be manifest that he has given Europe its greatest scare since the Bolsheviki reached the gates of War-

saw in 1920, and that the newspapers will print many a black headline before the debate over him is ended, and he sinks at last into the gray gloom of exploded and forgotten politicians.

The most surprising thing about him, it seems to me, is that his emergence should have been surprising. He was, in fact, implicit in the Treaty of Versailles, and, indeed, in what passed, toward the end of the war, as the Allies' statement of war aims. The underlying purpose of the whole uproar, we were told, was to heave out the Hohenzollerns, and give the German people the great boon of democratic government. There was no sign that any considerable portion of them longed for it, but nevertheless it was to be given to them. Ostensibly, the aim here was purely philanthropic: the Germans were to be lifted up in spite of themselves. But under that lofty purpose there lurked a scarcely concealed desire to make and keep them weak, and it was generally believed that both birds might be brought down with the same stone. The old imperial army, though it had been beaten at last, had held out against all the rest of Europe for four long years, and the evidences of its appalling prowess were on every side. No one wanted another dose out of the same bottle, and it was felt that a good way to avoid it would be to turn out the undivided and highly military Hohenzollerns and set up a gang of democratic politicians, who could be trusted to spend most of their time and energy fighting one another, and so have little left for the external foes of their country.

This was wise reasoning so far as it went, but unfortunately it overlooked some unpleasant corollaries. The politicians who began practise in Berlin actually behaved, at least for eight or ten years, precisely as the Allied metaphysicians had expected. That is, they devoted themselves wholeheartedly to getting and keeping jobs for themselves and their friends, and were willing to make almost any imaginable sacrifice of their country's interest to that end. They agreed to the Dawes Plan, the Young Plan and a dozen other such fine schemes, all of them designed to keep Germany bankrupt and impotent. They were quite willing, on the one hand, to ruin German capital, and on the other hand, to enslave German labor, if only they and their gangs could continue in office thereby. When, as and if any German protested he was proceeded against with great vigor by the *Polizei*, and if he proceeded from talk to acts he was denounced to the common enemy, and in not a few cases actually put in the way of losing his life. Meanwhile, these stupid and often knavish politicians were depicted in the Allied and American press as great statesmen, and the fact was conveniently overlooked that a huge gulf was beginning to yawn between the German government and the German people.

The situation became so unendurable a year or two ago that even the Allied diplomats, an extraordinarily stupid class of men, began to realize that if it were not relieved there would be an explosion. Accordingly, certain concessions to the realities began to be made. Unfortunately, they were made grudgingly and did not go far enough; worse, they were arrived at after open and often raucous debate, so that everyone, including the more intelligent Germans, could see plainly that there was little honest good-will in them, but mainly

only the yearning of England to get ahead of France, or *vice versa*, or the desire of Mussolini to shine as a world statesman. As for the common people in Germany, they began to despair. The prevailing politicians, at best, were only too plainly duffers, and it began to be obvious that the country would go to pot if they continued in power.

The German masses were thus ripe for demagogues, and the preaching of new and revolutionary arcana. Both appeared promptly, for both had been in waiting since the first dreadful years after the war. There were two gangs of these demagogues. The one preached Communism and the other a kind of Fascism. Each promised, if put into power, to proceed at once to the elimination of the other. The Communists, with the horrible writhings of Russia so close and so full of warning, found it impossible to convince any considerable number of sensible men, but they made good progress among university innocents of the type of our own Brain Trust, and they found it easy to round up millions of recruits among the proletariat, which had nothing to lose but its chains. The Fascists appealed rather to the middle class, which had been ruined once by the Berlin politicians and was in fear of being ruined again. They made but little more impression on the enlightened minority than the Communists, but what they proposed was at least less cannibalistic than Communism, and most of them, at the worst, were at any rate Germans, so they began to gather support in the upper income brackets, and to enjoy the advantages that go with having money to pay for newspapers, parades and brass bands.

The ensuing combat was depicted by most of the American correspondents resident in Berlin as a low comedy comparable to one of our own presidential cam-

paings, and few of them believed that either the Communists or the Fascists would fetch the great body of non-political and naturally conservative Germans, most of whom, and especially the farmers, had a certain nostalgia for the Hohenzollerns, and were eager only to be let alone, that they might work hard and reaccumulate the capital wasted by the war, the subsequent inflation, and the pestilence of politicians. Many of these correspondents apparently believed that the Communists had the better of it; I can recall only one who predicted formally that the Fascists would really attain to power. The rest overlooked two things. The first was that the Fascists had much more money than the Communists, and could thus give a better show. The second was that they had developed in one Adolf Hitler, an obscure Austrian, a demagogic rhetorician of the first calibre—indeed, a fit match for either William Jennings Bryan or David Lloyd George, or for the two taken together.

This Hitler began modestly, and for a long while was a very minor figure in German politics. Down to 1923, when he got involved in some riots instigated by General Ludendorff and was jailed for a few months, he was scarcely heard of outside Bavaria. His political ideas, at that time, were somewhat vague. He had started out in Vienna as a Socialist enemy of the Hapsburgs, but had afterward shopped around among the small and often preposterous minor parties that arose in Germany after the war. Put up to speak, from time to time, for these discordant causes, he discovered an extraordinary talent as a mob orator, and was soon, as he himself says in "My Battle," "a master of this craft." It was a common feat for him to face a hostile audience of three or four thousand, and bring it galloping to the mourner's bench in an hour. German poli-

tics, in those days as in these, ran to rough-house, and Hitler did not disdain the protection of strong-arm men, but three times out of four he really didn't need it. He achieved on one occasion the impressive feat of talking down a hall full of Communists: many of them, in fact, rushed up to join him at the end, though neither he nor they knew where he was headed.

It is easy to see from Hitler's book that he is anything but a political philosopher. What he says in it is often sensible enough—for example, when he argues that Germany's first big task is to collar Austria and so consolidate the German people, and again when he argues that its natural route of expansion is along the Baltic, and yet again when he argues that it can never hope to make an honest friend of France—but always it has an air of second hand. In this it greatly resembles Bryan's "The First Battle," another effort by a mob orator to make effective rhetoric of the ideas of other men. Hitler was tutored as he went along by various theorists, but he quickly translated their theories into catchwords of his own, and he is quite as far from some of them today as Stalin is from Trotzky or Roosevelt from Moley. As an orator he is incomparable, at least in Germany. England may have his match in Lloyd George, as we had his match in Bryan, but the Germans have not seen his like in modern times. It is thus no wonder that they wallow in his terrific eloquence, and forget to notice that what he says is often absurd.

His anti-Semitism, which has shocked so many Americans, is certainly nothing to marvel over. Anti-Semitism is latent all over Western Europe, as it is in the United States, and whenever there are public turmoils and threats of public perils it tends to flare up, as it did in France in 1894, when the French feared a new Franco-

German war, and in Austria during the lunatic days following the war. The disadvantage of the Jew is that, to simple men, he always seems a kind of foreigner. He practises a religion that is not common, he has customs that seem strange to the general, and only too often he indulges imprudently in talk about going back to his own country some day, and reviving the power and glory of his forefathers. He is commonly a fierce patriot in whatever land he lives in, and he certainly was, at least in most cases, in Germany during the war, but his patriotism is always ameliorated, despite its excess, by a touch of international-mindedness born of his history, and in consequence he is commonly held suspect by patriots who can't see beyond their own frontiers. Thus he is an easy mark for demagogues when the common people are uneasy, and it is useful to find a goat. He has served as such a goat a hundred times in the past, and he will probably continue in the rôle, off and on, until his racial differentiation disappears or he actually goes back to his fatherland. In Germany, as in Poland, Austria and France, he has been made use of by demagogues for many years, precisely as the colored brother has been made use of in our own South.

But at the time Hitler began to prowl the land the Jew was suspect in Germany for another reason, to wit, his entanglement with Bolshevism. This entanglement, in large part, was imaginary, and at best it was much exaggerated, but nevertheless it had some reality, at least in the plain man's eye. There were plenty of Jews among the Moscow master-minds, and they had proved their puissance by putting down Jew-baiting in Russia, for long the chief field sport of the Christian masses there. Moreover, the bloody *Räterepublik* at Munich—long forgotten else-

where, but only too well remembered in Germany—had been set up and bossed by a Jew, and there were other Jews high in the councils of the Communist party, which proposed openly to repeat the Munich pillages and butcheries all over the country. It was thus easy for Hitler to convince his customers that there was peril in Israel, and in the end he managed to convince the more credulous of them that even the Jewish bankers, judges, doctors and store-keepers of Berlin were suspicious characters, though actually nine-tenths of them were quite as orthodox, politically speaking, as the men of their several classes in New York.

What followed was certainly not creditable to the German people, nor indeed to the human race in general. Once the paranoiacs on the lower levels were turned loose they proceeded instantly to extravagant barbarities, and the most innocent man, when he came under their fire, was no safer than the actually guilty. If Hitler had been able to confine the hunting to Communists there would have been no complaint in the United States and very little in England, for the Communists openly condone the even worse brutalities that have gone on in Russia, and would repeat them all over the world if they had the means. But when the Brown Shirts began to harass and intimidate, flay and murder perfectly innocent and helpless people, some of them Jews but probably more of them Christians, and very few of them Communists, then the world was shocked indeed, and Hitler has now discovered that shocking it is a very serious and dangerous business, with results not to be disposed of by oratory.

In such matters what is done cannot be undone; the main question, as I write, is how long the orgy will last, and whether it will wear itself out or have to be put

down by external force. If the latter is resorted to, and it takes the form of military pressure, we are probably in for another World War, though it may not follow immediately. The Germans, of course, without adequate arms, could not resist the French, but once the French got across the Rhine it would be difficult if not impossible for them to come back, and their presence there would inevitably set off a general conflagration. A general boycott would not be as dangerous, but its effect, I think, would be to strengthen rather than weaken Hitler at home, where his theory of a huge conspiracy against Germany would begin to be believed in by millions who now doubt it. Moreover, such a boycott would be resisted elsewhere in the world, and here in the United States it might easily launch a formidable anti-Semitic movement, especially in view of the fact that many of the current Jewish leaders in this country are very loud and brassy fellows, with an unhappy talent for making the *Goyim* Jew-conscious.

There remains the remedy of sober second thought. It can be relied on to cure even the wildest and wooliest of public manias soon or late, but unfortunately it takes time. That a majority of Germans will go on yielding to Hitler *ad infinitum* is hard to believe, and in fact downright incredible. Either he will have to change his programme so that it comes into reasonable accord with German tradition and the hard-won principia of modern

civilization, or they will rise against him and turn him out. He has the bayonets today and so he seems irresistible, but it is not to be forgotten that those same bayonets, on some near tomorrow, may be turned against him, and that he has only one throat to cut. Mussolini, to be sure, has lasted since 1922 and the Bolsheviks of Moscow since 1917. But I incline to think that the Germans are much less likely to follow Slav and Latin example in this matter than to stick to the ways of their own blood.

Bryan, in all probability, was actually elected President of the United States in 1896, and yet by 1904 he was already a comic character, and before he died his old huge following had shrunk to a feeble rabble of half-wits. Lloyd George was the sole and absolute proprietor of Great Britain in 1919, but today he bosses only himself.

The Ku Klux Klan in 1920 had millions of members, could count upon close to a majority in Congress, and controlled at least twenty States, but by 1925 it was dispersed and impotent, and its Hitler was in jail. The American Legion ran amuck at about the same time, and somewhere in my files are at least twenty pounds of newspaper clippings describing the heroic mauling of unarmed and helpless persons, including many Jews, by its brave lads. Yet the Legion, today, is simply a gang of professional pension-grabbers, and even politicians kick it about.

# THE AMERICAN MERCURY AUTHORS

GRACE ADAMS, PH.D. (Cornell), is the author of "Psychology: Science or Superstition?" She is now writing a book on child psychology.

HELEN BIERCE is the daughter of the late Ambrose Bierce.

BOB BROWN's latest book, "Let There Be Beer!" was published last year.

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EDWARD ROBINSON teaches piano in New York. He has an M.A. from Columbia, and has done some composing.

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CHARLES FITZHUGH TALMAN has been a staff meteorologist for the United States Weather Bureau since 1896. He is the author of "Our Weather" and "The Realm of the Air."

LOU WYLIE has worked on newspapers in New Orleans and Brooklyn. She is now living in Brooklyn.

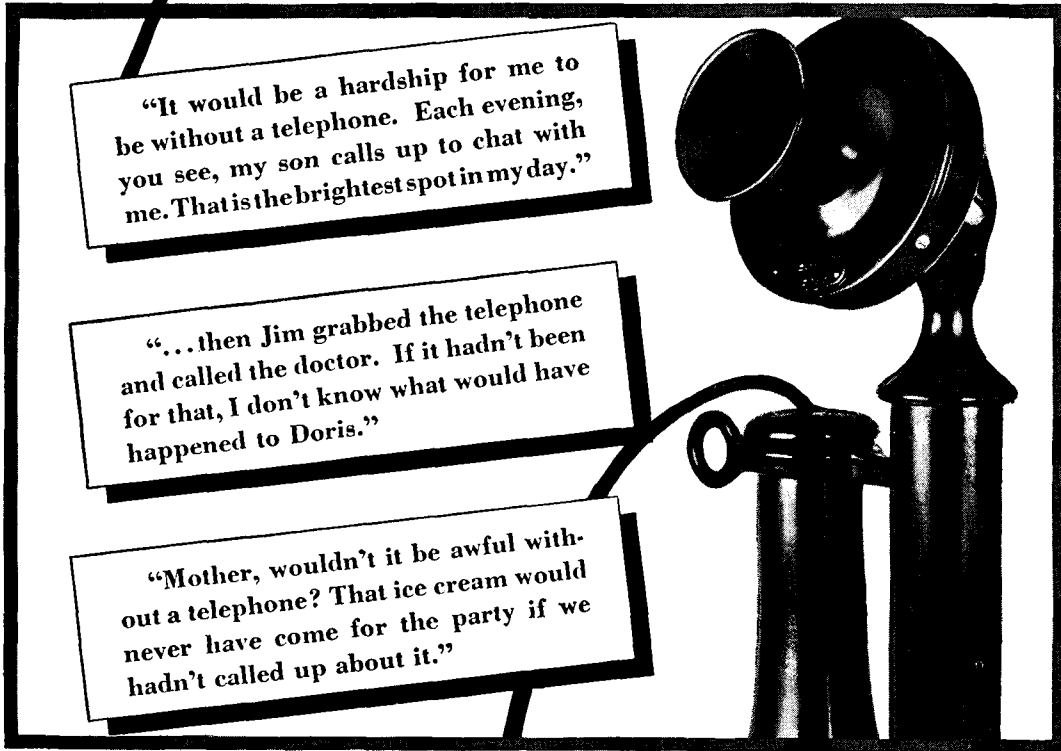
DANE YORKE was formerly in business in New York.



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mark that he can no more define poetry "than a terrier can define a rat." He also makes a few comments upon individual poets. He says that "Pope had less of the poetic gift than Dryden," and that "for me the most poetical of all poets is Blake," both of which remarks are hardly contributions to literary criticism. It's the old story: Mr. Housman is a better poet than a critic. Poets can seldom discuss their own craft with acumen; God is not generous with Coleridges.

WILLIAM CRARY BROWNELL.

*By Gertrude Hall Brownell. Charles Scribner's Sons*  
\$3.50 5 3/4 x 9; 383 pp. New York

Mrs. Brownell has selected certain salient passages from her late husband's books, beginning with "French Traits" (1889) and ending with "Democratic Distinction" (1927), and brought them together in an anthology of 225 pages. To them she appends some autobiographical notes made by Mr. Brownell before their marriage, and her own recollections of his later years. He led a placid life and wrote relatively little. After four years of Amherst he entered newspaper work in New York, and was an active journalist for ten more. Then he went to Europe for three years, and the chief fruit of the stay was "French Traits". In 1888 he became literary advisor to Charles Scribner's Sons, and in that post he remained for forty years. He died in 1927. The volume is a fitting memorial to a critic who resisted sturdily all the varying winds of doctrine, and ended as he began, an uncompromising advocate of high and austere standards in letters. There are thirteen portraits.

### RELIGION

COMMUNAL PIETISM AMONG EARLY AMERICAN MORAVIANS.

*By Jacob John Sessler. Henry Holt & Company*  
\$3.50 5 3/4 x 8 1/2; 265 pp. New York

The Moravians, now numbering but 38,000 in the United States, are an unusually enlightened people. Unlike the other smaller Protestant sects, they do not go in for theological pedantries. Any reasonable decent Christian is free to join their communion, and in their ceremonies they avoid preaching as much as possible and give most of their attention to music. Their two principal settlements, at Bethlehem, Pa., and at Winston-Salem, N. C., are notably quiet, xviii

well-to-do and charming communities. But in their early days in Pennsylvania they were racked by doctrinal feuds and produced a large crop of theologians. Fortunately, some of these theologians were also men of great worldly prudence, so the brethren prospered, and with prosperity came a decline in theological fury. Dr. Sessler's book covers ground that is unfamiliar, and is judiciously done. He went to the original sources, and found a great deal of interesting material.

### SOME EXPERIMENTS IN LIVING.

*By Peter Ainslie. The Association Press*  
\$2 5 x 7 3/8; 190 pp. New York

Dr. Ainslie is a Christian clergyman who accepts Matthew xxii, 39, and in consequence a large part of his life has been spent in trying to put down strife and hatred. In this modest volume he describes some of his adventures—in the war against war, in the long struggle for justice for the Negro, and in various other such enterprises. He has encountered many difficulties, and suffered some serious reverses, but his faith is still strong and he keeps up the fight. At the end of his book he sets forth his credo. He believes that "Protestantism is the most reasonable expression of Christianity in this period," but his doctrinal position is free and easy, and he has the utmost tolerance for those who dissent from his views.

### PHILOSOPHY

SOME TURNS OF THOUGHT IN PHILOSOPHY.

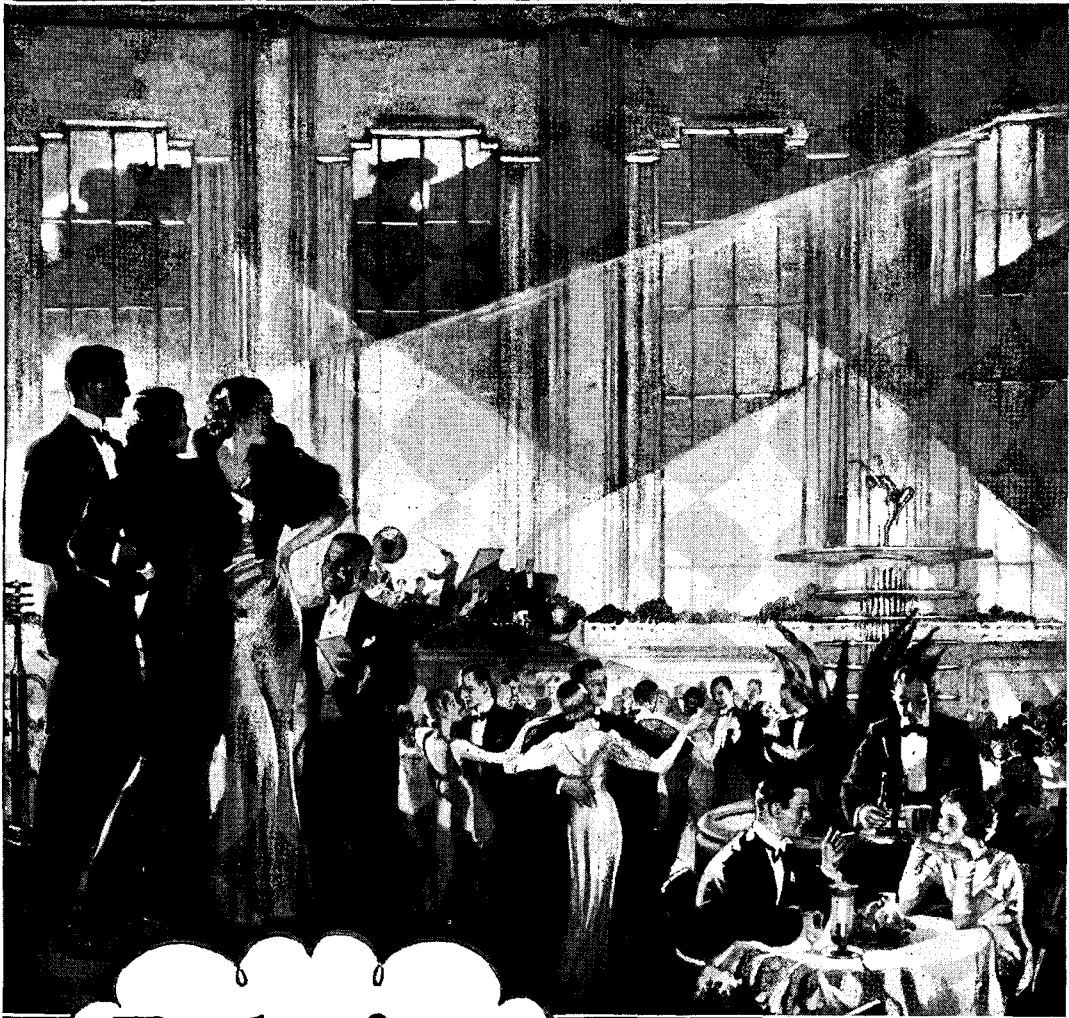
*By George Santayana. Charles Scribner's Sons*  
\$1.75 5 x 7 1/2; 121 pp. New York

There are five essays here: on John Locke, on F. H. Bradley, on "Revolutions in Science," on Dr. Freud, and on Julien Benda. The book will add nothing to Mr. Santayana's reputation. The chapters on the four men are feeble enough, but the one on science is downright bad. The author thinks that science should become humble, and that "it should no longer imagine that it is laying bare the intrinsic nature of things"; but this is precisely what science itself has been saying for the last ten years. Mr. Santayana appears to be at least a decade behind in his reading. He still writes as he did in "The Life of Reason," which is to say, pleasantly but superficially. He is really no philosopher at all, as his essay on Locke proves for the hundredth time. He is simply a literary man who happens to be a diligent but not very attentive reader of the simpler philosophies.

*Continued on page xx*

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A N H E U S E R . B U S C H ~ ~ ~ S T . L O U I S

xix



## CHECK LIST OF NEW BOOKS

*Continued from page xviii*

MODERN MAN IN SEARCH OF A SOUL.

By C. G. Jung. *Harcourt, Brace & Company*  
\$3 5/8 x 8 3/4; 282 pp. *New York*

The eleven essays here were originally published in German and Swiss periodicals, and are now translated into English by Cary F. Baynes and W. S. Dell. An idea of their contents may be had from some of their titles: "Dream Analysis in Its Practical Application," "Problems of Modern Psychotherapy," "A Psychological Theory of Types," "The Stages of Life," "Psychology and Literature," and "Archaic Man." They are somewhat elementary, but they will serve as good introductory reading to those who are not familiar with Dr. Jung's ideas. One chapter, "Freud and Jung—Contrasts," will interest all students of modern psychology. In it is to be found the Swiss psychoanalyst's latest views of his former teacher and also of Dr. Adler. He pays high tribute to both of them, but he adds: "Both schools, to my way of thinking, deserve reproach for over-emphasizing the pathological aspect of life and for interpreting man too exclusively in the light of his defects." There is no index.

### TRANSLATIONS

BEOWULF.

By Harry Morgan Ayres. *The Bayard Press*  
\$1 5/4 x 8 3/4; 97 pp. *Williamsport, Pa.*

Dr. Ayres calls his version of Beowulf a paraphrase, but it actually comes closer to the meaning and manner of the original than most of the more literal translations. It is done, in the main, in rhythmic prose, but now and then, when he encounters "passages of general reflection, summary or more ambitious poetical description," he resorts to dithyrambs. The effect is excellent, and the transpositions and additions that have been made give the saga a new coherence. The date of Beowulf is still disputed by scholars. The only known MS. is commonly assigned to the Tenth Century, but there is internal evidence that the poem is much older. The hero, a Swedish prince, crosses to Denmark to rid the land of an amphibian monster with a large appetite for the military. There ensue some sanguinary battles with the monster's heirs and assigns, and in the end Beowulf himself is killed.

DIE STADT OKLAHOMA.

By George Milburn. *Der Rowohlt Verlag*  
RM. 4.50 4 1/8 x 7 1/2; 207 pp. *Berlin*

This is a translation, by Hermynia Zur Mühlen, of Mr. Milburn's "Oklahoma Town", a large part

of the contents of which appeared serially in THE AMERICAN MERCURY in 1929 and 1930, before the publication of the book in this country. There is a note at the bottom of the table of contents of the German edition saying that eight of the chapters are therein printed for the first time, *da ihre Veröffentlichung von der Zensur verboten wurde*—that is, in the United States. This seems to be news; certainly no word of their suppression has ever got about. The identity of the censor is not revealed. The translation is competently done, and the idiomatic difficulties of the original are surmounted with unflinching success. The cover design is by George Grosz.

STORIES OF GOD.

By Rainer Maria Rilke. *W. W. Norton & Company*  
\$2 5 x 7 1/2; 208 pp. *New York*

THE TALE OF THE LOVE AND DEATH OF CORNET CHRISTOPHER RILKE.

By Rainer Maria Rilke. *W. W. Norton & Company*  
\$1.50 5 3/4 x 8; 38 pp. *New York*

The translation, by M. D. Herter Norton and Nora Purtscher-Wydenbruck, of "Stories of God" is very well done, and even more than "The Journal of My Other Self," published in America two years ago, the work is expressive of the author's strongly mystical nature. Rilke has been widely read since his death in 1926, and this volume, with his early prose poem, "The Tale of the Love and Death of Cornet Christopher Rilke," published simultaneously, and also in excellent translation by Mrs. Norton, will be welcome to his American readers.

### BIOGRAPHY

SARAH BERNHARDT: *Divine Eccentric.*

By G. G. Geller. *The Frederick A. Stokes Company*  
\$2.75 5 1/2 x 8 1/4; 308 pp. *New York*

Sarah Bernhardt was born in Paris in 1845 of a Jewish mother and a Catholic father. She started acting as a child, but was so complete a failure that the celebrated dramatic critic Sarcey predicted that she "most certainly will never make an actress." But she persisted, and despite her numerous illnesses, of which tuberculosis was only one, she finally won over Sarcey and even Victor Hugo. Her triumphs thereafter, until her death in 1923, are well known. She was of a very tempestuous and moody nature, and her managers had plenty of trouble with her. Her amours became legendary, and she was accused of having seduced, in turn, the Czar, Napoleon III, and Pope Pius IX. The truth apparently was that she had

*Continued on page xxii*



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of THE AMERICAN MERCURY

published monthly at Camden, N. J., for October 1, 1933

State of New York County of New York ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Lawrence E. Spivak, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of THE AMERICAN MERCURY and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:  
Publisher, Alfred A. Knopf 730 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.  
Editor, Henry L. Mencken 730 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.  
Managing Editor, Charles Angoff 730 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.  
Business Manager, Lawrence E. Spivak 730 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owner is: The American Mercury, Inc. (Owner).  
Stockholders—Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 730 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y., Henry L. Mencken, 704 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, Md.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more or total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK  
Sworn and subscribed before me this 20th day of September, 1933.  
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xxii



## Check List of NEW BOOKS

*Continued from page xx*

bad luck with men: they'd succumb at sight, but the next morning they'd disappear. Her one serious attempt at marriage was disastrous. M. Geller writes about her with more ardor than discrimination, but he gives all the main facts. There are thirteen illustrations and an index. The translation is by E. S. G. Potter.

**JOHN RUSKIN. *An Introduction to Further Study of His Life and Work.***

By R. H. Wilenski.

*The Frederick A. Stokes Company*  
\$4.50 5 3/4 x 8 3/4; 406 pp. New York

Mr. Wilenski, who is a well known English art critic, has written a full and intelligent biography of Ruskin. There is much fresh information in it, and the writing is good. Ruskin's struggle for recognition was one of the most heartbreaking in English history. "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," "Modern Painters," and "The Stones of Venice," when they first appeared, were stupidly received. "Sesame and Lilies" had a slightly better fate, but it was considered fit only for young girls. "Ethics of the Dust" was a complete failure. It was only when he was about sixty that the public and the critics paid any serious attention to him, and then his reputation grew quickly, so that very soon he was called the art dictator of England. Mr. Wilenski thinks that he was "a great man and a genius." As for his strange aberrations, he attempts to explain them as the result of a congenital manic-depression. There are many notes and an index.

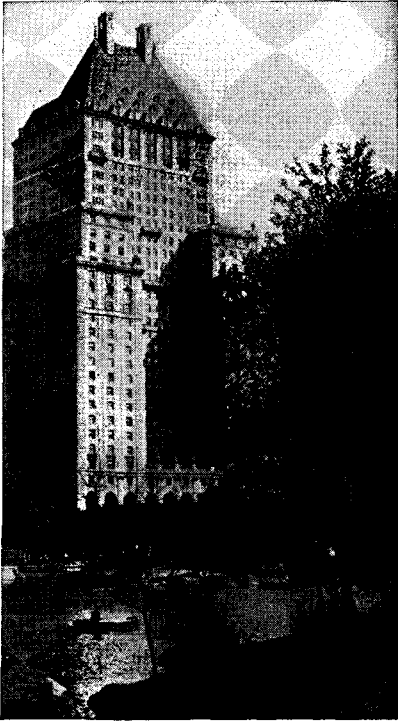
## FICTION

**THE FIRST WIFE and Other Stories.**

By Pearl S. Buck. *The John Day Company*  
\$2.50 7 1/2 x 5; 312 pp. New York

The best three stories here are tragic. "The First Wife" tells of a Chinese husband who has lived with Western ideas for seven years and his wife who still lives by the old traditions. Feeling her limitations, upon his return home she takes her life. "The Old Mother" is the story of an old woman forced to live with her modern daughter-in-law; it deals with her great unhappiness in not being able to make the necessary adjustments in her new life. "The Rainy Day" recounts the trials of a young student, just returned from the Western world, with his old-fashioned family, and his logical suicide. The other stories though not as distinguished, are sympathetically done. Mrs. Buck's publisher has contributed an interesting biographical sketch of her.

*Continued on page xxvi*



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xxvi

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*Continued from page xxii*

#### HOT SUMMER.

By Oscar Graeve.

Farrar & Rinehart

\$2

7½ x 5; 281 pp.

New York

The story here is of Wilfred (preferably Buck) Jones, a well-heeled young bookkeeper, living in West 12th street, New York, who is consumed by dreams of operating a banana plantation in the tropics. Girls, he tells himself, have no place in his life. Yet, he falls for the snobbish Claire Stickney, an artist on a fashion magazine who lives in Mr. Montello's boarding-house with him, and makes a date with her for dinner, and when she doesn't show up he consoles himself with Daisy Gordon, Claire's exotic and mysterious roommate. He becomes involved with Daisy, for all his vows, and try as he will, he cannot put her out of his mind. In the end, when he discovers that she is expecting, he proposes to her in the approved manner, and is inordinately happy. Mr. Graeve has written an amusing novel.

#### SAND DOLLARS.

By Katharine Ball Ripley.

Harcourt, Brace & Company

\$2

8 x 5¼; 236 pp.

New York

The Ripleys, living near Charleston, dropped their first \$30,000 in a peach orchard; then additional thousands in Wall Street; then more in cotton-mill stocks and the bonds of a chain furniture instalment company; then more in South American bonds; then, after the crash of 1929, still more in other stocks and bonds. In the end, having learned that they were more intelligent than the bankers and brokers and bond salesmen who advised them, they put their next thousands, derived mainly from a novel written at white heat, and especially from the movie rights, into good old government bonds. Mrs. Ripley writes well.

#### MANY HAPPY RETURNS.

By Richard Strachey.

Harcourt, Brace & Company

\$2.50

7¼ x 5; 262 pp.

New York

The story here is of Mrs. Treetop and her two sons—Samuel, who becomes enamored of a chambermaid, and Joseph, who takes up with a young man. Mr. Strachey has some cleverness, but his book is thin stuff and of no importance.

#### CRIME DE LUXE.

By Elizabeth Gill.

Doubleday, Doran & Company

\$2

7½ x 5; 310 pp. Garden City, L. I.

A mysterious lady smelling of camphor is murdered aboard the *Atlanta*, and Benvenuto Brown, an amateur detective, pins the crime upon Lord Stoke, who turns out to be the lady's husband as well as a rogue and a bounder.

# RICHARD DIVER • *A Romance*

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The Rise and Fall of Alfred E. Smith, by *Dorothy Bromley*  
The Future of Banking, by *A. A. Berle, Jr.*  
A New Code for South America, by *Carleton Beals*  
Biography of Admiral Mahan, by *Louis M. Hacker*  
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# BOOKS



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